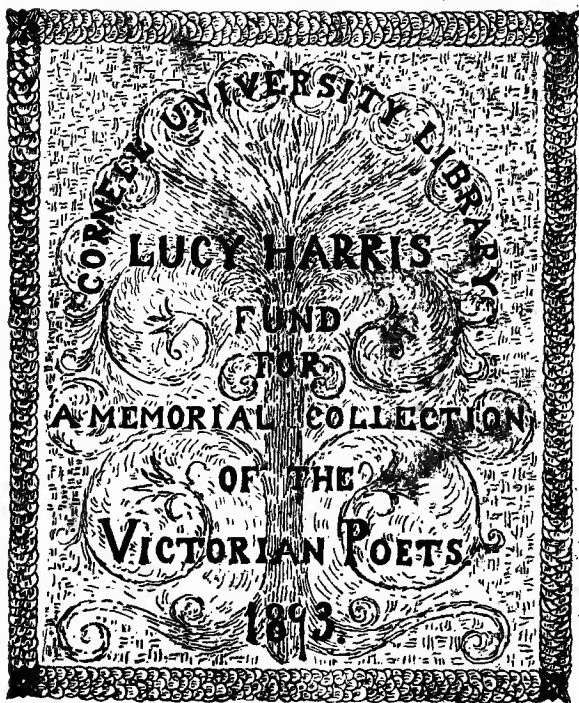




LOVE SONGS



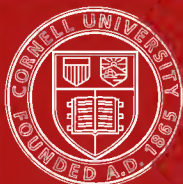
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# POETICAL WORKS

OF

## GEORGE BARLOW.

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POEMS AND SONNETS. In Three Parts. 1871.

A LIFE'S LOVE. 1873.

UNDER THE DAWN. 1875.

THE TWO MARRIAGES: a Drama. 1878.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE. 1878.

THE MARRIAGE BEFORE DEATH, AND OTHER  
POEMS. 1878.

TIME'S WHISPERINGS. 1880.

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"Mr. Barlow writes not merely fluently but with a command of both language and thought. . . . His verse is full of promise."—*Westminster Review*.

"Mr. Barlow has not only a fluent pen but an indubitable gift of beautiful and harmonious expression. He is no careless workman, trusting to the force of genius alone and neglecting the strictness of method and the grace of form. Indeed, grace and finish are the conspicuous and prevailing qualities of his poetry."—*Literary World*.

"Mr. Barlow's chief excellence is the way in which he weaves the world of nature external to him with the fancies of imagination and the feelings of the human heart; hence it is that his poetry—which we can cordially commend to all lovers of the muse—is full of similes drawn from the world of external nature."—*Standard*.

# LOVE-SONGS.

BY

GEORGE BARLOW,  
=

AUTHOR OF "TIME'S WHISPERINGS," "THROUGH DEATH TO  
LIFE," ETC.

---

"If 'poets are all who love, who think great truths and tell them, and the truth of truths be *love*,' then Mr. Barlow is a poet of no mean order."—*British Quarterly Review*.

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# LOVE-SONGS.

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## DAISY'S THIMBLE.

### I.

O dear small thimble  
Which fingers nimble  
Have used so daintily, scores of times,  
I hold you lightly,  
Shining so brightly,  
And think of your wearer in far new climes,  
When these same fingers  
O'er which love lingers,  
Will turn the pages no more of my rhymes.

### II.

These hands, here growing  
Like blossoms blowing,  
So white and tender, so soft and still,  
Youth's golden flowers  
In life's first hours,  
In meadow and coppice, by stream and rill,  
Have gathered : now never  
For ever, for ever,  
Our English roses their touch will thrill.

## III.

Good-bye, good-bye to you,  
My verses sigh to you,  
O dainty finger that wearest the shell,—  
The silver agile  
Dear thimble fragile  
Whose daily glitter I know so well;  
See how I take you  
For her sweet sake, you  
Small silver token, which unseen fell.

## IV.

Fell from her finger,  
Fated to linger  
Henceforth for ever in secret lair;  
Yea, when the owner,  
Unconscious donor,  
Is breathing the arid and Eastern air,  
Thou shalt be sign to me,  
Breathe a soft line to me,  
Memory of hours and flowers that were.

## V.

The fingers that used thee,  
Daintily bruised thee  
With soft sweet pressure of snow-white tips,  
Will no more glitter  
Amid the litter,  
The spangled litter of work-room snips—  
They soon the roses  
That Love discloses  
Must gather, growing as grow the lips.

## VI.

The sacred flowers  
Of Love's deep bowers  
They soon shall gather, those fingers dear ;  
They pass away from us,  
A sun-sweet ray from us,  
To lands where suns strike rapid and sheer ;  
They leave us, grieve us,  
Sadden, bereave us,  
Just at the dawn of the rosebud year.

## VII.

O dawning rosebud,  
Whiter than snows bud,  
Pass forth and gladden the strange far land ;  
Leave our pale bowers  
And storm-swept flowers  
Behind, and gather in white quick hand  
The fairy legions  
Of blossoms in regions  
Unknown, untrodden, a stranger strand.

## VIII.

Thine hands have lingered,  
Plucked and have fingered  
English hair-bells, whose stems were slight ;  
English roses  
And hedge-side posies  
Which laughed, upgazing with laughing might  
Into the fairer  
Eyes, bluer and rarer,  
Which pierced the blossoms like star-rays bright.

## IX.

These were the flowers  
Of tender hours  
Of girlhood, laughing as laughed the maid :—  
These were the first days,  
Free from love's thirst days,  
Soft happy moments while love delayed  
His ardent coming,  
Nor yet the humming  
Of his swift wings over the young winds strayed.

## X.

This was the May-time  
Of growth and of playtime,  
The season wherein the plumes were shaped  
That, snow-white pinions,  
In new dominions,  
Snow-white, or lovely and rainbow-draped,  
Shall soon remind us  
That time did blind us  
While one more blossom its sheath escaped.

## XI.

A blossom growing  
Without our knowing,  
To shine, full-petalled, in other fields ;  
To gleam, bright-golden,  
Not in the olden  
Sad land which yearly its tribute yields  
To India's younger  
Yearning and hunger,  
A rose to blazon the flag she wields.

## XII.

If ever returning,  
The full rose, burning,  
Bright, full-grown, beautiful, lights our shore,  
What will it say to us,  
Soft yea or nay to us ;  
Will it be mindful of days before ?  
Will it forget them,  
Leave or regret them,  
Will there be one look soft as of yore ?

## XIII.

Will there be one look,  
Star-look or sun-look,  
Sweet as the smiles were, tender of old,  
A soft smile starry  
For hope to carry  
Upward in arms that clasp it and fold  
The dear look beaming,  
Lightening and gleaming,  
In from our chill land's vapour and cold ?

## XIV.

If ever again to us,  
Thrice welcome then to us,  
The rose returneth, ah ! shall we know  
The same shape older,  
The curve of shoulder,  
The innocent young lips ? Will there be glow  
Of recognition,  
O rosebud vision—  
Ah, who can tell us ?—time's waves fast flow.

## XV.

Yea, faster even  
Than ripples in heaven  
Of love's fair ocean, love's moonlit streams ;  
Fierce time advances  
With surge-white lances,  
Across life's furrows his huge wave gleams ;  
His ponderous massive  
Charge, stubborn and passive,  
Bears force more cogent than love's frail dreams.

## XVI.

So rose returning  
With petals burning  
Clear-shaped, love-reddened, across the foam,  
We may not know thee,  
May pass, forego thee ;  
A foreign blossom not formed at home  
Thou then may'st seem to us,  
A distant dream to us,  
No straight stalk fashioned in English loam.

## XVII.

So it may be then !  
What shall we see then ?  
The English Daisy—or some strange stem  
With new grafts clinging  
Not of our bringing,  
And our hands having no part in them ?  
Nor our hearts knowing  
The weird buds growing,  
Whose garish colours our eyes condemn.



## XVIII.

O Daisy simple,  
With sweet smile-dimple,  
Oh, keep thine eyes on thine English name :—  
Be ever Daisy  
Through Indian hazy  
Strange summers when heaven one widelit flame  
Burns fierce above thee ;  
So shall we love thee  
Though ceasing more of thy life to claim.

## XIX.

Be English rosebud,  
Through fierce sky glows, bud  
Above thee, paling thy tender bloom ;  
White, white for ever,  
In soul changed never,  
But deepening only in pure perfume :—  
Lifted by passion  
In sweet true fashion,  
As years flit by thee, and swift consume.

## XX.

And thou, small token,  
Shapely, unbroken,  
I'll keep thee by me till she returns,  
In sign that, moulding  
To woman, but holding  
In safe sweet keeping, Love o'er her yearns ;  
I kiss the thimble,  
Whose bright shield nimble  
From nimble fingers the needle spurns.

## TO THE UNIVERSE-GOD.

### I.

O God who broodest o'er the ocean spaces,  
And shinest in the gold-winged glimmering cars  
Wherein night's steeds are yoked for heaven-high  
races,—

Splendid amid the cream-white hosts of stars,  
Divine and fragrant in all flowery places,  
Awful where red-lipped War his pale bride chases,  
Glory his white-lipped bride  
Through battle's foaming tide,—

Great God serene amid the bloodless faces  
Of all the outstretched dead,  
And golden on the head  
That shines with girlish golden hair and graces  
Some half-grown rosebud girl,—  
And foam-white in the curl

Of waves that scour the sand with ravenous paces,—  
Oh lift the yearning world, swift day by day,  
With sweet victorious pulse along its stedfast way!

### II.

Thou art in heaven and in the utter deep  
Of fiery flame-winged hell, and in the light  
Of suns and moons and in the spotless sleep  
Of children,—in their glances clear and bright:  
Thou art in the golden corn the reapers reap,  
And in the thundering cataracts that leap  
Along the shaking rocks;  
Thou art in the snow-white flocks

And in the April tender buds that peep  
    With laughter through the panes ;  
    Thou art in the blood-red stains  
Of crime, and in all daring deeds that keep  
    Earth's tidal waters pure ;  
    And through sin's groves obscure  
Thou passest as a breeze with wings that weep,—  
In all the vales of earth and in the sky  
Thy white strange glory, God, we, worshipping,  
    descry.

## III.

But, most of all, thou shinest in the fair  
    Splendour of man and in the tender heart  
Of woman, and in love's rose-gladdened air :  
    All loveless souls thou piercest with thy dart,  
Through passionless pale flesh thine arrows tear,  
And cowardly souls thou tanglest in a snare,—  
    Thou scourgest them until  
    Thou hast thy final will,  
Yea, till the fruits of flower-sweet love they bear ;  
    Thou art within the rose  
    Of love when first it glows,  
A joy, a deep delight, a wonder rare ;  
    Thou art within the bloom  
    Of passion, a perfume  
That brings the utter peace of heaven's hope there ;  
Thou hast thy crown eternal in the power  
Whereby all budding loves burst into burning  
    flower.

## THE LAST FAREWELL.

Ten years ago the sweet sea shone supreme  
With glow and splendour of love's early dream ;  
Passion touched every wave with magic gleam.

The white waves, laughing, foamed anear our feet ;  
The summer afternoons, 'mid flowers, were sweet ;  
We wandered through the woods, the golden  
wheat.

Now where art thou? And, sweetheart, where  
am I? \*

Where are the sunsets of that early sky?  
Love's silver streams have vanished ; they are dry.

Thou hast chosen—keep to it—thy fitting part,  
And given away thy spirit, and thy heart ;  
My thought no longer lingers where thou art.

Lo ! our great rose of love I take in hand,  
And, glancing once back, towards the fair lost  
land,  
I let thy face with its sweet breath be fanned.

Once more, once more ; then towards a shoreless  
sea,  
And mountains where thou mayest not follow me,  
I pass ; God's world is wide ; we both are free.

Or rather free thou art not ! thou art bound,  
Fettered by this world's anklets to its ground ;  
Thou hast lost thy wreath ; thy chaplets are un-  
wound.

If thou art gone, all roses are not dead ;  
The fair white lily lifts, for thee, its head ;  
Thy voice is hushed ; the May-winds speak instead.

Still, though not round thy feet, the grasses blow,  
The woods, the sea-side hanging woods we know,  
Watch the fern-fronds unfasten, row by row.

If thou art dead, the old live waves are white ;  
The old moon glimmers o'er the old tracks at  
night ;  
The same sun climbs the flashing midday height.

Thy ghost, thy phantom, fleeteth into air ;  
And, where it was, this summer rose is fair,  
Sweet with the smell still of thy waving hair.

Thou hast not strength to face the fiery morn ;  
I leave thee ; not with anger, not with scorn ;  
As twilight, when the golden day is born.

Yea, thou art twilight ; glimmer with thy face  
Once more upon my path, then let the race  
Begin for me that leads to love's embrace.

To love's embrace ; but, lost love, not to thee ;  
Unto mine heart " Long-bound heart, thou art  
free,"  
I say ; " unfettered, chainless as the sea."

Farewell, farewell ; along the winds my cry  
Sounds, like the sea's wail when the storm is high,  
When the pent sea-shriek mixes with the sky.

Farewell, farewell ; no kiss, nor grasp of hand ;  
Only one look from seaward towards the land ;  
Thou, blind, art dead ; God lives to understand.

*May 15, 1879.*

## A DEATH-SONG.

Bury me not  
In some lone spot,  
Though tender flowers be there of love's own  
training ;  
Yea, not the meadow-sweet  
And ferns about my feet  
Would keep my lonesome spirit from complaining ;  
My soul would fly afar  
Where human spirits are,  
In sight of human forms some solace gaining.

Take me to where  
In weighted air  
Of mine own well-beloved eternal city  
Great fervid thoughts arise,  
Yea, where men's glowing eyes  
Gleam ever with fresh hope or love or pity ;  
Oh set me but within  
London's impassioned din,  
And even my dead pale lips may chant a ditty.

Plant fragrant bloom  
Above my tomb,  
Yea, all the season's gentlest maiden flowers ;  
Ferns, and the creamy grace  
Of lilies thereon place,

And build above me rose-hung shaded bowers ;  
    But take my body not  
    To any country plot,  
There to be tortured by the brainless showers.

    Let flowers of thought  
    To me be brought,  
Yea, all the pent-up city's burning treasures ;  
    When lovers young begin  
    Their new sweet life to win,  
Let me in spirit smile amid their pleasures ;  
    Let the strange sunset red  
    That crowns dim London's head  
Be the first air of heaven my wing-sweep  
    measures.

    Not by the sea  
    Oh bury me,  
Not 'mid the white waves desperate and foaming ;  
    Some gentle forest grave  
    I would the sooner have  
And join the nightjars there amid the gloaming,  
    And bloom in meadow-sweet  
    And touch the lingering feet  
Of lovers through that moonlit forest roaming.

    That would be peace,  
    Yet not release  
From all the life-long load of care and craving ;  
    The life of tender flowers  
    And joy of woodland hours



Balm to my spirit cleansing, soft, and saving,  
Doubtless would sometimes give—  
Yet there I should not *live*,  
But only sleep, the green leaves round me  
waving.

No rest I crave,  
No quiet grave,  
But ceaseless passionate life,—yea, this for ever ;  
A living spirit high  
I would not stoop to die  
Or cease the old songful turbulent endeavour ;  
I would for ever know  
Sweet love, though that be woe,  
And passion, though its pain abateth never.

Give me, O Death,  
Not slumbering breath  
As of a child, but all a man's completeness ;  
Grant me the perfect strength  
And risen power at length  
Of man, and pour upon me woman's sweetness  
From lips of women dear  
Whom thy hand may bring near,  
Staying for me their heavenly swift-foot fleetness.

Yea, not the tomb,  
But woman's bloom,  
Deathless, immortal, perfect, endless, holy—  
Let this, my meadow-sweet,  
My dawning spirit meet,

Trembling with tender footstep, soft and slowly,  
Towards my new-born desire,  
Waking my spirit-lyre  
Again, and all mine heart renewing wholly.

Lct such indeed,  
Death, be my meed,  
Reward supreme, surpassing, beatific ;  
Deathless am I, O Death,  
If but the pure flower-breath  
Of woman in life-giving tides pacific  
Wander above the mould  
Which doth my body hold ;  
I fear not then thy dart and lunge terrific.

I fear thee not  
If but my lot  
Bring me love's sacred gifts and spotless favour :  
Yea, if love's utmost glow  
My living soul may know  
And love's fruits innermost most precious savour,  
Methinks I have a force  
Thee, pale Death, to unhorse,  
And never at thy thundering tilt need waver.

O woman sweet  
Whose gentle feet  
Have brought me in this world mine holiest  
blessing,  
Be near me, kiss me, when  
No help avails of men,

But only thine help, godlike and caressing ;  
Lift me above the tomb,  
Yea, sever thou the gloom,  
And deaden thou death's fleshly pangs distressing.

Divide with me  
Death's foaming sea,  
Smiling defiance at death's sable minions ;  
Cleave thou the sounding air,  
Sweet—open me a fair  
Road into heaven by white surge of thy pinions ;  
Bid all the stormy waves  
Be still, and grass-grown graves  
Be but as love's rose-perfumed pure dominions.

Rise with me, love,  
This life above,  
Long ere the actual death the doorway shadeth ;  
That when his real step sounds,  
And his cold breath abounds,  
And his deep sword our fast-joined heart invadeth,  
Victors already we  
May, in our calm strength, be—  
And conquerors then, as each the other aideth.

Then in no tomb,  
No death-crowned gloom,  
We—you and I, sweet love—will rest or tarry ;  
No blossoms shall we need,  
Nor priests to intercede,

Nor prayers our air-light souls towards heaven to  
carry :

For death died long ago

When, white as just-fallen snow,

God stooped, august from heaven, our souls to  
marry.

## EARLY POEMS.

(Written in 1870.)

### I.

#### AN EARTH-SONG.

##### I.

That I could sing the splendour,  
And some account could render  
Of all the joys of living like a man upon the earth ;  
The wonder of the daytime,  
The greenery of May-time,  
The mystery of death-time, the mystery of birth !

##### II.

That I could pierce the ether,  
The earth—and plunge beneath her  
Wide-rolling prairie-panoply of surface-smiles and  
flowers ;  
And get me to the centre,  
And find the fires that rent her  
Cliffs and chasms and mountain-tops, the live volcanic powers !

##### III.

Returning to things human,  
I'd sing of man and woman,  
And all the life of love-time, the glory of the land ;  
How man is handed over,  
A child become a lover,  
From woman unto woman, from tender hand to  
hand.

## IV.

Man leaves at last his mother,  
And findeth in another  
A wondrous new development of love that ceaseth  
never ;  
More wonderful than dreams were,  
Fulfilled with fairyland, fair  
Fruition of the fancy-realm that seemed a myth  
for ever.

## V.

And as he sits a-dreaming,  
Along his brain is streaming  
A river of recollection that linketh old and new ;  
He sees the realization  
Of childhood's admiration  
Of doughty deeds of heroes, of the beautiful and  
true.

## VI.

How clearly he remembers  
By stirring up the embers  
Of memory, how Woman first appeared in childish  
dreams ;  
A goddess of the ether  
Who smiled on men beneath her,  
All garmented in sunset, and bright with burning  
beams.

## VII.

Calm, crowned, an earthly centre,  
Her robes without a rent, her

Presence an embodiment of all we fancied fair ;  
    With eyes of wondrous seeming,  
    With tenderness all gleaming,  
And a light upon her raiment, and a glory in her  
    hair.

## VIII.

One hardly likes to think of it,  
    Again in dreams to drink of it,  
A draught of joy so wonderful, a picture passing  
    pure ;  
    And yet, not all ungrateful,  
    We are glad that in the hateful  
Dark lanes of later life a ray of light can still endure.

## IX.

A memory of the vision,  
    The dream, the intuition,  
The God-vouchsafed glimpses of the life that  
    ought to be ;  
    Ah me ! the early river,  
    The flakes of light that quiver  
Across its course miles upward from the weary  
    weary sea !

## X.

It leaps along the sandbanks  
    And laughs atween the fern-ranks,  
With splashing and with dashing, and with  
    sounds of happy glee ;  
    It has not seen the town yet,  
    The grief is further down yet,  
The child is *not* the model of the man that is to be.

## XI.

Then come the town-pollutions :  
An æon of ablutions  
Shall not restore the freshness of the stream above  
the town ;  
The Arve has joined the Rhone now,  
With tardiness of flow now,  
And weightier wave of water it for ever runneth  
down.

## XII.

On towards the sea though !  
Little does the stream know  
All the wealth of wonderment awaiting it in  
death ;  
Dreams that it shall find there  
All before it found fair,  
Purity of raiment, and a joy that takes the breath..

## XIII.

Fullest restoration  
To rightful rank and station ;  
Perfected development of all the dreams of youth ;  
Even for him a May-queen,  
Fair, with eyes of grey-green,  
And bloom of black-brown tresses, and the white-  
ness of the truth.

*Good Friday, 1870.*



## II.

## A BRIDAL-CHANT.

*Hexameters.*

Over the hills and far away, right into the home  
of the summer,  
Hand in hand together they go, towards the region  
of sunset;  
She, fair as a daughter of Eve; he, bright as a  
beam of Apollo,  
Straight, upright as a rod, not bent and bowed  
together,  
Like to the careworn men who within this fortunate island  
Toil and moil for a crust, and exist, and dream  
they are living.  
Fair as the sons of Greece who beneath the unspeakable ether  
Wrought, and fought with the gods, the givers of  
might to mortals,  
Givers of might and of manhood, and lust of doing  
and daring;  
Givers of strength in the struggle, and endless  
perseverance.  
Fair as Psyche is fair, bright, beautiful, gift of the  
goddess  
(She who rewards the brave with ecstasy not to be  
uttered),  
Sweet as Venus herself, was the Bride who blossomed  
before him.

## III.

## THE EMIGRANT'S SONG.

Hark to the dashing of the deep blue sea  
As the sides of the boat are gleaming  
Through deep-drawn furrows of the lands that are  
free,  
With a foam-line after us streaming !

Life before us, and room to expand !  
Let us steer for the home of the sunset,  
Let us make for the shores of an infinite land  
And smile at the swift waves' onset.

Let us cast from off us the chains of the old  
And look to a life that is new ;  
As the creeds of the past wax fainter and cold,  
Clear rises a creed that is true.

We shall soon be free ; far out of the reach  
Of the priests, and the tales of tradition ;  
Fear not: we shall ground on a gravelly beach,  
And arrive at a rightful condition.

Let us leave the churches that clamour and cry,  
And put the books on the shelves ;  
Come, men, my brothers, at least we will try  
To find us a faith for ourselves !

We are leaving lands where respectable saints  
Look down on the poor and the old ;  
Where Nature is scorned, and humanity faints,  
And women are bought and sold.

Where priests shriek shouts, and condemn their  
betters,  
While women fall faint, and fade before them,  
Believing in lies, believing in fetters,  
And not in the truth of the Spirit that bore them.

The Spirit that lords it over the sea,  
Shines in the sunshine, walks in the wind,  
Sounds in the life of the leaves of a tree,  
Kisses the eyes of a soul that has sinned.

Clothèd upon with the might of the thunder  
And brighter than brightness of lightning rays ;  
Fulfilled with life—dividing asunder  
The soul and the body, the nights and days.

The Spirit that breathes in the infinite ether,  
And clothes the night with a mantle of stars ;  
All-gracious ; smiling on mortals beneath her ;  
Spirit of peace-time, Spirit of wars.

Strong to rejoice in the roar of the battle,  
Strong to inspire the might of a man  
Calm in the midst of its thunderous rattle,  
Leaping alert in the heart of the van.

Holding the threads of the life of the nations,  
Songs of the seasons, tides of the sea ;  
Dealing rewards and condemnations,  
Fashioning, causing to cease to be.

Bringer of birth-time, worker of wonder,  
Daily developing life in the earth ;  
Maker of heat, light, forger of thunder,  
Seasons of sadness, hours of mirth.

Maker of hours of work and of playtime,  
And above all things, Author of love—  
Love the incarnate spirit of May-time,  
Spirit that broods with the wings of a dove.

Love that slayeth and love that healeth,  
With the power of life and death in his wings ;  
Love with the ice-cold power that congealeth,  
And love the looser of frozen strings.

Sweet love that gladdens with gleams of the  
spring-time,  
And scent of flowers, and singing of birds ;  
And leaves that re-echo the lilt of the wind-  
rhyme,  
And laughter, and musical lowing of herds.

Such is the Spirit that fools are blaspheming,  
Preaching of darkness, horrors of hell,  
Torturing souls who are timidly dreaming  
That *if* a God reigneth it *must* be well.

Well for the good men, well for the sinners,  
Well for the priests, whose power shall fall ;  
Well for the saints and the feeble beginners ;  
Some way or other, well for us all.

## IV.

## THE DEAD MEN'S SONG.

## I.

Praise we death  
Who stays our breath  
And sends us rest from pain ;  
Slay we life  
With edge of knife  
And hurl him back again.

## II.

Praise the tomb,  
The utmost gloom  
Of garments graveyards hold ;  
The dead men's lyre,  
And flames of fire  
From mouth of skeleton rolled.

## III.

Praise the dance  
Of feet that prance  
Upon the ball-room floor  
Deep down below,  
Where worm-buds grow,  
And light's alive no more.

## IV.

Slay we love,  
The feeble dove,  
And smear her wings with clay !  
Here below  
We dead men know  
Her not—the beetles play.

## V.

And mosses damp,  
And clink of clamp,  
And spiders' webs entwined  
In hair of ours,  
In woven bowers,  
Are dear to dead men's mind.

## V.

Half-eaten eyes  
With no surprise  
We see : that sort of thing  
Is common here ;  
Whole eyes are dear ;  
This is the song we sing.

## V.

## THE WIFE'S RETURN.

Deary me, what a dirty room !  
Quick, my husband, bring me a broom,  
And let me sweep away the gloom  
That reigns when I'm not here.

This is the way you treat the place  
When I, your wife, no longer grace  
This home of ours with the light of my face—  
'Tis enough to move a tear !

Get you gone, and let me alone ;  
Out of the way ; and when you're flown  
*I'll* sweep it clean as if 'twere mown—  
*You* go and fetch the beer.

The only thing, I often think,  
That the men are fit for is to drink  
Or empty soap-suds into the sink :  
I'm never away but I fear ;

Fear for the garden most of all,  
Dream of the pigs, and hear them squall,  
And see the children playing at ball  
On the flower-beds, far and near.

See the potatoes going to rot,  
The peas in pieces, and what not,  
The cabbages all a mouldy lot,  
And never a currant clear.

Never you mind—I'm home again,  
And that's the chief thing ; only when  
Next time I go, be sure that then  
You manage better, dear.

---



## VI.

## GOOD-NIGHT.

Good-night, good-night !  
Till dawn of day  
May soft sleep stay  
By you, I pray ;  
Till breaks the light ;  
Good-night—good-night:

Good-night, good-night !  
The day was glad  
When you I had  
In sight, but sad  
Is now my plight ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
The darkness teems  
With you : in dreams  
I hunt the gleams  
Of tresses bright ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
Till to-morrow  
Sorrow—sorrow :  
Then we borrow  
Wings for flight ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
I think of you,  
My hero true,  
The long night through ;  
Till shines the light ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
To-morrow, sweet,  
Again we meet,  
And gone the feet  
Of evil plight ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
I feel your hand,  
I see you stand  
In dim dream-land,  
In garments bright ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !  
Yours am I, sweet,  
Slow to sigh, sweet,  
Swift to fly, sweet,  
Strong for flight ;  
Good-night—good-night.

Good-night, good-night !	Good-night, good-night !
The last adieu :	The last kiss blown,
To-morrow's dew	The last look flown, .
Will fall on two,	From off his throne
On love alight ;	Must love alight ;
Good-night—good-night.	My own—good-night.

---

## VII.

## BEYOND THE YEARS !

Beyond the years there lies a compensation  
For all this heaped-up mountainous pile of woe,  
This Alpine elevation of the snow  
Of sorrow, this most piteous tribulation,—  
These oceans filled at founts of women's  
tears ;  
For all, I tell you, waiteth compensation  
Beyond the years !

For all the agony, and heart-sick groaning,  
And agitation of uplifted hands  
That seek to pull God down from where He stands  
And force His silent eyes to see the moaning,  
To listen to the heaving of the lands,  
There waiteth somewhere, somehow, compensation ;  
A flower expands

Of hope that beckoneth weary footsteps forward  
Towards a possibility of life,  
A possible cessation of the strife,  
A possible approach of earth's ship shoreward :  
As watcheth for a husband's step a wife,  
Our eyes are strained towards this compensation  
For ceaseless planetary tribulation,  
This cutting of the cord of our damnation  
With keen-edged knife.



TO A LILY.



SUMMER LOVE.



## TO A LILY.



### SUMMER LOVE.

#### BRUISED BLOSSOMS.

My love went—flinging from her mantle fast  
Along the dusty and forsaken road  
Strange flowers and fruits that bloomed and  
shone and glowed,  
Re-lighting the pale tapers of the past,  
Making the wilderness a temple vast ;  
And a sweet woman, slighter but as fair,  
Went, gathering bruised blossoms in her hair,  
And round about their stems her veil she cast.

And unto me she brought the flowers and fruits,  
Weeping, and with soft pity in her eyes,  
And laid her tender hand on severed roots ;  
And if a bud or any petal lies  
Broken, she wailleth—and the sundered shoots  
To re-establish in green bloom she tries.

## THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

A lily with the fragrance of my rose  
Mingled strange fleeting odours passing sweet,  
And in the imprint of that flower's feet  
Left novel tints and subtle signs of snows ;  
Now in my heart a double blossom blows,  
And all my soul is ravished by the heat  
Of summer twice inflamed, and seems to beat  
Responsive as the ascending season grows.

For first the rose with crimson scent delayed  
The full outpouring of the lily's breath,  
And faint her presence was and pale as death,  
And timidly she lingered in the shade ;  
But now I kiss with valour every braid,  
And yearn ecstatic o'er each word she saith.

---



## THE BATTLE OF FLOWERS.

Two flowers struggled hard within my soul,  
The spirits of a lily and a rose—  
And first on high the crimson odour grows,  
And next a snow-white vapour seems to roll  
The gates of sound asunder, and control  
My heart till song's liquescence overflows ;  
So each sweet flower alternate rules and blows,  
Each in a variously fragrant stole.

But lo ! one morning when I woke I saw  
Myself adorned in smooth delicious white—  
And, wondering at the unaccustomed sight  
Of such a body made devoid of flaw,  
Perceived myself with deep unuttered awe  
Clothed in the lily's plumes from left to right.

---

## CRIMSON AND MANY FLOWERS.

“ I loved another blossom,” so I said—

“ And she was somewhat fairer, sweet, than  
you ; ”

The maiden answered not, but closer drew  
The tender-shielding bounty of her head,  
And in that moment lo ! one love was dead  
And golden wings proclaimed a goddess new,  
And as her pinions fluttered into view  
The sun was risen turbulent and red—

The vehement approach of a new day  
That shall surpass the former, and outshine  
With a supreme unparalleled display  
Those weeping misty seasons that were mine,  
And round about my rugged brows shall twine  
Crimson and many flowers for thorns and grey.

---

## A WOMAN'S BLOOM.

“ My heart hath suffered, sweet one:” But she  
brought  
The nearer that down-bending, gracious head,  
And, though no word articulate was said,  
That tender token hath a marvel wrought,  
A miracle of healing beyond thought—  
For on a lonely grave a rose was red  
That moment, and a crimson heart that bled  
Was stanch'd and white, and ceased to suffer  
aught :—

And over me there flowed a wealth of hair,  
And that strange endless unforeseen perfume  
Was subtle and abundant in the air—  
The fire that scorches but doth not consume,  
The sweet outpouring of a woman's bloom,  
Unutterably wonderful and fair.

---



PARTING.



## PARTING.

### THOSE SUMMER NIGHTS.

When we were happy in those summer nights,  
Making great London but a soft green wood  
As each beside the other silent stood,  
Breathing a mutual nosegay of delights,  
We were not conscious of love's present heights—  
But now, possession being cold and thin,  
With no sweet golden lovers' gate to win,  
We recognise and eulogise love's rights.

"Ah! that was sweet"—so each may sob and say—  
"That evening when glad August in the trees  
And shrubs made such a tender lovers' breeze : "  
For, visible from an October grey,  
The past is as a gold transfigured day,  
The present as the sapless nights that freeze.

---

## SWEET FANCY'S HAND.

It is sweet fancy's hand that crowns the past—  
For, when we were together, you and I,  
The ground was dull and motionless and dry,  
Across it a wan veil of colour cast ;  
Now, swept by my imagination's blast,  
It glitters like a countless summer sky,  
And round about our feet the flowers fly,  
And wings of birds succeed each other fast.

For every step we took I see a flower  
Bloom in the dreary desert of the squares,—  
The arid pasture of our London airs  
Is even as a sweet rose-planted bower,  
And every spot we lingered in an hour  
An endless flood of vegetation bears.

---



## A FAR-OFF HILL.

Ah, sweet, now you are gone, I see the days  
We spent together, colourless before,  
Flame with triumphant lustre more and more,  
Till every street we threaded is a blaze  
Of splendour, and the sad dust-stricken ways  
Shine as a moon-enamoured silver shore ;  
My fancy brings each tone of yours of yore,  
And every smile, into my weeping gaze.

It always is so : as a sun-kissed hill  
Shines in the distance, girt about with fear  
And mystery, whose beauty could not fill  
The over-daring eye when we were near,  
So gleams a far-off passion,—soft and still  
And awful, and unutterably clear.

---

## WITH WHITER PLUMES.

I loved a lily : The sweet flower was near,  
And, bearing petals less majestic far,  
Shone as a lesser individual star,  
Made by a sweet proximity as dear  
As the imperial rose,—and white and clear  
The lily shone ; but when the flower was full,  
Another hand had interfered to pull  
The petals,—an intruder's foot was here.

And so I miss my lily and my rose,  
Fated to love for ever but to find  
No flower for me her tenderest depths disclose ;  
Yet bear I some triumphant mirth of mind,  
In that the lily kissed me, and hath shined  
Because of me with whiter plumes of snows.

---

## LOVE AND HONOUR.

I stood before a grave,—and honour said,  
    “ Heap loudly on the corpse that lies therein  
    Dust and departure—that the soul may win  
The eternal halo of a passion dead,  
And round about her lips for roses red  
    Twine lilies pale as her own life hath been ;  
    And seize thine harp, sad singer, and begin  
Some low-voiced tune to tears and yearning wed.”

But love said, “ Rather let the corpse awake !  
    And let sweet lips for roses be the charm  
    To bring towards an unhesitating arm  
The tender limbs and soft desires that shake  
And flutter as a lily for thy sake—  
    Even as a lily loud in her alarm.”

---

## THE MAGIC OF MEMORY.

## I.

When you were *with* me, sweet, I could not lead  
Your presence through the corridors of rhyme :  
But you are smitten by the snows of time,  
And by swift disappointment's sword I bleed,  
And, having chosen an unselfish creed,  
In every flowery avenue of mind  
A gracious footprint of my love's I find,  
And sonnets spring by thousands out of seed !

Before I lost you, I was silent,—now  
That I have given you into other hands,  
The gardens of my brain are tuneful lands,  
And linnets twitter round about my brow,  
And nightingales are loud on every bough,  
And thrushes chant your praise in laughing  
bands.

## II.

The roads we trod together, gleam and shine,—  
Grey, cold, and sour, and flint-bedecked before,—  
But now the moon of fancy on the shore  
Of bitter absence sheds a silver line,

And, as the gossamer-woven webs combine  
To elude our present overpowering tread,  
But flame in sweet prismatic green and red  
And gold and fairy lacework clean and fine  
When distance has transfigured the broad field—  
So every stone we touched in this dull town,  
Then garbed in ordinary dust and brown,  
A golden flash of colour seems to yield,  
And shines like some anointed luscious shield,  
Under the bitter fire of memory's frown.

---



WINTER LOVE.





## WINTER LOVE.

### THIS AFTERNOON.

This afternoon I go to meet my love,—  
And, through the earlier moments of the day,  
My pulses like swift throbbing surges play,  
Mixed with the soft respiring of a dove,  
And pinions beat the azure cliffs above  
And frolic in and out each windy bay—  
I triumph ; for she hath not answered “ Nay ;”  
I hold her written word in sign thereof.

Ah, love ! 'tis but a wintry afternoon,  
Yet will we make it as a summer sleep  
Winged with strange odours passing soft and  
deep—  
A clear and passionate crimson-hooded swoon :  
And though our ruddy heaven be over soon,  
It leaves a rose for either heart to keep.

---

## A SUN-GOD.

Soon thou shalt lay thy tender hands on me  
And the strong force of passion shall ignite,  
Struck as a sudden comet into light  
By the inviting flame of love I see  
Bloom as a crimson mantle over thee—  
Even as the snows below the hills are white,  
But next the Alpine sun shine red and bright,  
Rosy for miles upon the mountain-knee.

Yea, thou shalt change me from a quiet star,  
Following the universal rounded road,  
Desiring thee in silence from afar,  
Into a sun-god,—bearing the white load  
Of thy sweet misty body in a car  
Of flame towards some desirable abode.

---

## A TALISMAN.

I have not seen you,—and the days have been  
But as a meagre and remorseful time,  
The likeness of some frozen blue-clad clime,  
Some destitute abode of tears and sin ;  
But summer is upon us, and we win  
The roses and the dreams of mute delight  
That clothe the sweet limbs of a summer night,  
And hem the fragrant arms of summer in.

Summer is as a fragrant rose-plumed bird,  
Young, and delirious with its own desire ;  
Winter is as a worn-out aged fire —  
But somewhere of a talisman I heard  
That hath the magic potency to gird  
Roses about each wintry wan-built briar.

---

## LOVE'S CRUELTY.

Sweet, every meeting-time may be our last !

    We stand upon time's beach, and, after, one

    May launch a boat with cunning keel to run  
Against the sidelong pressure of the blast,  
With curved resistance of a reedlike mast,

    Into the hollows of the western sun—

    Time finished, red eternity begun,

Our love may be but as a rosebud past,

    Crying in some disastrous nook of garden  
After the heels of summer, who declares,

    Invincible and destitute of pardon,

His lips are languid for Australian airs,—

And, with love's endless cruelty, prepares

    The alternate hemisphere to inflame and harden.

---

## I SEND A SONG.

This afternoon I am to meet you, sweet.  
The torrents of my longing overflow,  
As from white clouds descending streams of  
snow  
Cover with feathery flakes our halting feet :  
I send a song in front of me to meet  
The soft advancing rosebud-lips I know  
So truly, that I think I see them grow  
With increase soft and odorous and fleet.

Song ! lay upon her lips my panting soul  
Already in advance of this slow clock,  
That it may sway from side to side, and rock  
Even as a flower floating in a bowl  
Upon those fragrant billowy tides, the whole  
Of which shall overwhelm me when I knock.

---

## AND SHALL I SEE YOU?

And shall I see you, sweet, and are you still  
Soft and as white and gentle as before?  
And doth the moon still beam along the shore  
With tender eyes and yellow rays that thrill  
The pebbles and the yearning foam, and spill  
Their passionate effulgence more and more?  
Sweet, thou shalt lay thine hand upon the sore  
Heart-spot of parting, and thine eyes shall fill  
The cup of my strong being till it yearns  
And trembles into air and overflows:  
Even as the sun's imperious mandate turns  
The bending face and body of a rose  
Upward—till every petal doth uncloze,  
Blushing, and every vein and fibre burns.

---

## WHERE THOU ART, SWEET.

Where thou art, sweet, it matters not to know  
Whethersweet summer's sceptre reigns supreme,  
For thou art girded with a luscious dream  
That darts a rosy radiance over snow,  
As thou dost tread triumphant to and fro,—  
The light wherewith thy winged feet do teem ;  
Where they have trodden, the amorous grasses  
seem  
To blossom into flame and overflow,  
As at the advent of twin goddesses ;  
And, when thy hand is laid upon my neck,  
It is even as a shower divine to bless  
The solemn marble, cleansed from every fleck  
By the descending silvery flames that check  
The thunders of sin's turbulent distress.

---

## EVEN AS THE DOVE.

Even as the dove went, errant from the ark,  
    Speeding with hopeful pinions through the deep  
    To analyse the awful void, and peep  
If anywhere a green and living spark  
Her eyes of bright intelligence might mark—  
    Fly, fragrant-winged song, towards my love,  
    Dividing with the white breast of a dove  
The inanimate resistance of the dark.

Seek her, and hover over her in spite  
    Of the dark-panoplied adulterous storm,  
And seize from off her lips a rosebud white,  
    Tender and irreproachable and warm,—  
    And hasten with that soft inviolate form  
Through the wild ebbing armies of the night.

1871.

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## ODE TO ENGLAND.

### STROPHE I.

At length the lands arise  
With heaven-seeking eyes ;  
No more they search the past,  
And backward glances cast  
Towards fields of Galilee  
And that blue inland sea :  
But every land adores  
The God of its own shores,  
The Deity of its hills,  
The Spirit of its rills,  
Redeemer of its plains,  
Who o'er its cities reigns  
Cleansing each soul from stains.

### STROPHE II.

Lift up your eyes towards the morning brightness,  
Dwell no more 'mid the past like sons of slaves :  
Lo ! even here shines the exceeding whiteness  
Of Venus 'mid the surging crowns of waves,  
And Jesus rises from ten thousand graves.

The heroes of high history of each nation  
Speak in the burning records of the race ;  
Through wrongs, through woes, through speech-  
less tribulation,  
They sought the living God's great changeless  
face  
And now they shine star-saviours in each  
place.

Bright are their eyes and deathless is their  
glory ;  
Lift up your eyes to their eyes all ye lands !  
Yea, every nation, listen to the story  
Of those who moulded it with iron hands,  
And loosed its dim primeval swaddling-bands.

### STROPHE III.

O England, dwell no longer  
'Mid shows of things, and dreams :  
Rise, for thou art the stronger !  
Thy sunrise o'er thee beams  
And round about thee streams.

Stronger thou art and fairer  
Than lands thou hast obeyed :  
Thine azure heavens are rarer ;  
Why art thou thus afraid ?  
Why lingerest in the shade ?

Hast thou no spirits diviner  
 Than Jesus, Moses, Paul ?  
 Art thou content with minor  
 Slow-sandalled feet that crawl,  
 Not fly—that stumble, fall ?

Hast thou no hearts that carry  
 A yearning force supreme ?  
 Must thou for ever tarry,  
 Possessed by some pale dream,  
 While past thee nations stream ?

Rise ! greater than the immortal  
 Spirits of Greece and Rome  
 Thou hast within thy portal :  
 Within the ring of foam  
 That girds thine island-home.

## STROPHE IV.

England ! bring thou blossoms from all thy hills ;  
 Wreath thou tender lilies from sides of rills  
 Golden, flowing through vales that plenty fills.

Golden crowns of the corn, and crowns of red  
 Autumn leaves for the new God's kingly head  
 Bring thou ; he needs a wreath, for his wreaths  
 are dead.

Dead are the Jewish wreaths, and the flowers of  
 Rome :

Now God plunges his feet deep in the English  
 foam,

Seeking this land for rest, craving a Western home.

Wilt thou hound him away, shriek him away  
from thee?

Hurl him wandering forth over the barren sea?  
Build him a temple rather, marble in purity.

Let God rest and dream, hidden in thy deep meads,  
Hidden and wreathed in flowers, soothing the brow  
that bleeds

Yet from the spears and thorns, finding delight  
he needs.

Here is a land for a God; fair in body and soul.  
England, give to thy God body and heart,—thy  
whole

Measureless splendid might, as of tides that  
round thee roll.

### STROPHE V.

Lo! in tender accents, hark! the high God  
speaks;

England, let his message flush thy languid  
cheeks!

Give to him the great gift that his longing seeks.

Give to him thy children, fair and strong and free,  
Pure and brave and happy, splendid flowers of thee,  
Give to him thy manhood, thy maturity.

“Weary am I,” God saith, “of the pallid past;  
Brace me, wind of England, after burning blast  
O’ the arid Eastern deserts, where my soul was  
cast.

“ Now I turn me Northward : shall I find a race  
Fit to stand before me, unabashed of face?  
Shall I find in England home and dwelling-  
place ? ”

## ANTISTROPHE I.

Doth England hear and turn  
With longing eyes that yearn  
And sparkle at the voice  
Of Deity, and rejoice?  
Or doth she, cowed and pale,  
Hidden beneath the veil  
Of her own feebleness,  
Tremble at the stress  
And force of fiery sound  
That girdled her around  
When the high God spoke,  
And thunderlike he broke  
The silence, and she woke.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

Wilt thou with ferns and flowers from deep dim  
valleys  
Weave a divine sweet frontlet for thy king,  
O England ; now thy soul his trumpet rallies,  
What wilt thou in thine arms, O England,  
bring ?  
Wherewith wilt thou the eternal forehead  
ring ?

The bay-leaves wilt thou bind of all thy singers  
Around the eternal forehead broad and white,  
Touching with womanly and reverent fingers  
The brow, the eyes of marvellous sweet  
light :  
Then wilt thou bring rose-crowns of lovers  
bright ?

Oh, most of all, be thine own self, and ring  
him  
With thine own strengthened and victorious  
soul :  
This chiefest of all gifts, O England, bring  
him !  
Mingle in love's clear sacrificial bowl  
The wine of thine own heart made flawless,  
whole.

### ANTISTROPHE III.

Let love at length its mission  
In thine own home fulfil :  
Let love's sweet utmost vision  
Of perfect soul and will  
All devious passions still.

Let love at length be chainless ;  
So shall love be supreme,  
Then for the first time stainless,  
A golden sunrise-gleam  
Upon a golden stream.

Pour through thine own dear meadows,  
England, one burst of song,  
Scattering pain's shadows  
And all the black-plumed throng  
Of sorrows, strange and strong.

Meet, utterly white, fearless,  
The God who for thee pines :  
Glad, sighless, pangless, tearless,  
Casting aside the signs  
Of suffering he divines.

Thine immemorial sorrow  
He knoweth, and shall slay :  
Lo ! crimson dawns the morrow  
Of many a mournful day  
Through centuries grim and grey.

## ANTISTROPHE IV.

Not the dreams of the past, of the days of old,  
God needs : not strange dreams of the walls of  
gold  
In heaven and jewels and pearls and treasure un-  
told.

Not these things ; but the breath of the English  
air  
And blossoms of spring from dells where ferns are  
fair  
And jewels of star-white petals than pearls more  
rare.

And jewels of glances bright and tender and grey  
Better to God now, dearer, than star-like ray  
Of glances piercing the cloudless Eastern day.

And weapons of strong men's arms from the  
Northern plains  
Whereover the future's sun, now rising, reigns ;  
Rich armour of fearless countless hearts for his  
fanés.

These and the sound of our seas by day by night, '  
The limitless organ-peal of breakers white  
Thrilling the new-found heart of God with might..

And the utter strength of the soul : this God re-  
quires ;  
And all the worship and music of English lyres  
And worship of limitless sea-like hearts he de-  
sires.

### ANTISTROPHE V.

Lo ! with brave sweet accents England turns to-  
thee  
Great God of the past world, king now of the sea  
Girding her white cliffs, lord of futurity.

"Take my thousand meadows ; take each hill and  
plain ;"  
So saith England : "over free glad spirits reign ;  
Rule till as my seas are, souls are clear of stain.



“ Pour thy kingly presence through the throbbing  
land :

Sons of God by thousands shall before thee stand  
Holding daughters of thee by the white, white  
hand.

“ Sons of God and daughters, saviours, shalt thou  
find

In the race thou choosest ; leaders of mankind,  
Voiced as are the surges, winged as is the wind.”

· EPODE.

Beyond the faintest region of stars or skies  
Lo ! England pierces the future with sunbright  
eyes.

Great spirits beyond the spirits who crowned the  
past  
Shall lift the future towards summits unreached  
and vast.

Already the sound of their feet at the doors is  
heard  
And the wide land shakes and quakes at their loud  
first word.

Christ-men, Christ-women, whose feet at the  
bright doors stand  
Shall lift and redeem and heal and deliver the  
land.

The God in their eyes shall pierce through the  
lessening gloom

And their splendour of heart shall be treasure and  
flame and perfume.

And the places waste shall blossom, the wild ways  
sing

At the message of peace and redemption and joy  
they bring.

These England bearing thou shalt stand forth as  
a queen

And rule the future, triumphant and great of  
mien.

And God in thy waves and upon thy hills shall  
sound

And in women's souls and in men's with God's  
kiss crowned.

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## TO THEE, SWEET.

The music of thy song, sweet,  
Has sounded through the night :  
Its accents pure and strong, sweet,  
Its fervour calm and bright,  
Have lifted me along, sweet,  
Have brought God's heaven in sight.

I rested on the sound, sweet,  
With happy eyes closed fast :  
Its tender magic bound, sweet,  
My soul ; its glory cast  
A golden veil around, sweet,—  
It changed the weary past.

I hear the song by night, sweet,  
I hear it in the day :  
At dawn of soft-grey light, sweet,  
It shines upon my way ;  
Ever its flame in sight, sweet,  
Leads, like some heaven-sent ray.

Oh, I will try, my own sweet,  
To be to thee the flower  
Thou singest of ; my tone, sweet,  
With woman's tender power  
Shall soothe—thou shalt be shown, sweet,  
Love's deepest rose-hung bower !

And in that bower of joy, sweet,  
Thy sorrows kissed away,  
Shall pain not nor annoy, sweet ;  
My heart in thine shall stay :  
Love's pleasure shall not cloy, sweet,  
Nor bloom of love decay.

I dreamed a tender dream, sweet,—  
I tell it to thee here ;  
But the pure, gracious theme, sweet,  
Is only for thine ear :  
It was a sunrise-gleam, sweet,  
Beautiful, noble, clear.

I dreamed I came to thee, sweet,—  
All barriers slipped away :  
All raiment fell from me, sweet,  
I was as white as day ;  
I laughed in utter glee, sweet,  
More glad than I can say !

All raiment earthly melted  
Away in that fair dream :  
Alone with beauty belted,  
O lover, I did seem !  
I stood by thee and felt it  
Sweet, sweet,—a heaven-gleam !

Naked I stood for thee, sweet,—  
Divinely white and pure :  
God clothed with passion me, sweet ;  
But all that could obscure  
And hinder soft love, He, sweet,  
Stripped with a mandate sure.

So all my beauty came, sweet,—  
Is it so much indeed ?  
About thee like a flame, sweet,  
Thy blossom, yea thy meed ;  
I had no thought of shame, sweet,  
I knew what love decreed.

I passed into thy form, sweet,  
Just like a soft, soft breeze,  
A dear leaf-shaking storm, sweet,  
That laughs amid the trees :  
White, tender, loving, warm, sweet,—  
White as the white, white seas.

I rushed into thine arms, sweet,  
I rushed into thy soul :  
Dead was each fear that harms, sweet,  
I saw love's sacred whole  
Revealed : now nought alarms, sweet,—  
I've read love's deepest scroll.

I passed with perfect peace, sweet,  
Into a life quite new :  
From bondage to release, sweet,  
A freedom won by you :  
Past pangs and sorrows cease, sweet,—  
I sing, glad in the blue.

I sing for very gladness,  
I, who was once afraid ;  
I, who once in deep sadness  
Sat, as in dark damp glade ;  
I, who have met grim madness,  
And longed to sip night-shade.

I sing ; for thou hast won me,  
Sweet lover, poet, king :  
Thy loving soul hath spun me  
Soft wedding-raiment ; ring  
Of genius given, and done me  
Proud honour ; so I sing.

I come to thee in dreaming,  
I come in waking thought :  
When fancies swift are streaming  
Throughout me, clasped and caught  
In golden network gleaming,  
I come : such dreams I've brought !

I come on earth ; in heaven,  
Sweet love, I'll come the more :  
When earth's worn garb is riven  
And on the eternal shore  
Life's bark is tossed and driven,  
My love at last I'll pour

In utter perfect power, sweet,  
Upon thee ! thou shalt know  
What pleasure love can shower, sweet,  
What woman's hand can throw  
Of magic round her bower, sweet—  
How woman's heart can glow !

I'll come to thee at last, sweet,  
And be thy very queen ;  
A whisper on the blast, sweet,  
A crown of starry sheen :  
I'll give thee all my past, sweet,  
Its storms, its hours serene.

I'll give thee the old loves, sweet,  
Such as the old loves were !  
Lead thee through former groves, sweet,  
Wherein, not all unfair,  
The former singing doves, sweet,  
Sang,—in the youthful air.

I'll give thee all the wonder  
Of sweet, sweet youthful days :  
Delight at wild stern thunder,  
Joy in the lightning-blaze ;  
The past, the now, the yonder,  
In one glad wreath I raise.

I come to thee a girl, sweet,  
Long ere my mother died,  
And bring thee a pale curl, sweet,  
Cut when I left her side:  
Better than gold or pearl, sweet,—  
A gift of me thy bride !

The great strange billows hoary  
I saw by childhood's seas  
I bring thee, and the glory  
Of myriad forest trees ;  
Yea, all the pure life-story  
Learned at my mother's knees.

My sorrows and my prayers, sweet,  
My groaning and my tears,  
The balm of summer airs, sweet,  
Hopes, agonies, and fears ;  
All these your strong soul shares, sweet,  
Yea, all the long, long years !

The years before we met, sweet,  
Before dear passion spoke,  
And tender eyes were wet, sweet,  
And love his golden yoke  
Upon our shoulders set, sweet,  
And all the old fetters broke.

I give thee all these things, sweet ;  
My body and my soul  
My utter passion brings, sweet,—  
*Myself*: I give the whole.  
I've got no golden wings, sweet,  
No nectared honeyed bowl.

But womanhood's dear whiteness  
Of body, spirit, mind,  
And lips of untouched brightness,  
And faithfulness thou'lt find !  
Oh, love hath perfect rightness,  
And sweetly all designed !

Oh, take me : hold me close, sweet,  
I'm but a woman's soul,  
A clinging woman-rose, sweet,  
Whose tendrils round thee stole  
To find in thee repose sweet,  
Love, husband, heaven-joy, goal !



## YEARNING.

Sad are all we to think  
Of sorrows, and wasted lives  
In the dim great towns, in the hives  
Of the people; for one that thrives,  
How many lost souls sink,  
Sink each day, do you think?

Why does He not stay His hand,  
God, who knows of it all?  
Was He strong to slacken the thrall  
Of the Jews, and Jericho's wall  
To shake for a Hebrew band—  
Shortened for us is His hand?

If we are too many, we protest;  
If we are too many for His eye  
To cover, for Him to espy,  
Let us cease to be, let us die;  
Let us sink in the sea to our rest,  
And cease not, dying, to protest.

To protest against high God who made  
More souls than His hands could keep,  
Who holdeth our sad tears cheap,  
And agony all we reap,  
The reward with which we are paid,  
We, whom alive He has made.

But, if He has not forgotten  
Any whom His hands have made,  
And no one, of all men, has strayed  
From His sight ; if He covers with His shade  
Each of us, by Him begotten,  
It is well, our torment is stayed.

Here, upon earth, it is wrong  
For a father to leave his child  
Without a provision ; less mild  
Than a mother is God who has smiled  
The world into being ? we are strong,  
Were it so, to say it is wrong.

Surely, in His hand, for each  
Hidden, must our God have in store  
Gifts He is willing to outpour,  
Waiting, and willing, and more ;  
Waiting till He can reach  
With His own, the hand of each.

Waiting until each cries  
For his Father, and looks to His hand ;  
Then will His bounty expand,  
And silent deserts of sand  
Beneath sun, beneath blue sweet skies,  
Shall be changed to a green glad land.

## A FAREWELL TO POETRY.

I take within mine hand  
The relics of the land  
Of dreams and songs and hopes and fair past  
glory ;  
I gather all the past  
And round about it cast  
A mistlike robe of soft remembrance hoary ;  
My singing days I bind  
Together, and swift wind  
In one the golden threads of life's fast-deepening  
story.

Dear blossoms, roses red,  
That once about my head  
Waved with a flood of soft caressing splendour,  
I bid you all farewell ;  
Yea, to each flower that fell  
Upon youth's brows from heaven with flower-  
touch tender ;  
A long goodbye to all—  
White roses, lilies tall ;  
I would not fail to one sweet final thanks to  
render.

O ferns and meadow-sweet,  
O rivulets that beat  
With silvery footing once amid the grasses,  
A long, long, long goodbye!  
O many a sunset sky,  
O giant purple clouds in heaped-up masses,  
O seas that climbed and surged,  
By wintry storm-blasts urged,  
Farewell—ere from you all my mortal vision passes!

Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye—  
Blue perfect summer sky,  
And all the dreams of youth and hopes that  
wandered  
Towards heaven on sun-bright wings:  
A new chant in me rings,  
And gone are the old ecstasies I pondered;  
Farewell, ye high designs,  
The wreath that manhood twines  
Is better than the leaves youth wildly plucked and  
squandered.

O happy days of song  
That, when my heart was strong,  
Brought me life's holiest rest and sweetest treasure,  
For ever, now, farewell:  
The silent time-waves swell,  
And their foam-crests no man can pass or measure  
Beyond the singing days,  
Beyond the need of bays,  
Urge me—towards death's sublime unidle wakeful  
leisure.

To those who love, I leave  
What my hand doth achieve  
Of passionate pure love-praise and worthy singing :  
The lovers who shall come  
When this my voice is dumb  
Shall hear in song faint echoes of it ringing,  
And I shall seem to be  
In heaven or on the sea,  
Or in the blossoms round their ladies' white  
brows clinging.

Oh, am I not a part  
Of England's songful heart,  
And can I pass and be no more a token ?  
Shall not the lovers young  
To whom my soul hath sung  
Hear by my chant the summer silence broken ?  
Shall not some girlish heart  
Tremble and bound and start,  
As if a real live voice some sudden word had  
spoken ?

I cannot wholly die  
If from the blue dear sky  
I bend in gracious song above true lovers ;  
If in the forest deep  
Among the leaves I sleep,  
And murmur 'mid the green, close-foliaged covers ;  
If o'er the eternal sea  
Some sign and speech of me  
In the wide track of pure mysterious moonlight  
hovers.

If in my city too,  
London made great and new,  
My voice is heard, though I am gone for ever ;  
If lovers, in my town,  
My singing for a crown  
Wear, then as the red sunset ceaseth never,  
I too shall never cease,  
Nor dwindle nor decrease,  
Nor from my well-loved streets my spirit-presence  
sever.

So, farewell, lovers all !  
Around me once I call  
The well-known English flowers and English faces :  
On every side of me  
Dear blossoms I would see  
Once more, sweet petals plucked from all loved  
places ;  
And round me once again  
The glad strong looks of men  
My friends I'd meet,—and eyes whose light all  
sorrow chases.

Sweet eyes of love once more  
Upon me, as before,  
Glance tenderly, lift once again long lashes !  
And, ocean, once more sound,  
And blossoms, once abound,  
For every flower some pang of death abases !  
And, lyre of mine, one song  
In death's teeth, clear and strong  
Cast,—ere death's conquering tide across my  
heart-strand dashes !

Then let me pass from life,  
And song and love and strife,  
Content, my labour done, my soul not fearing;  
Not doubting that I go  
Towards regions where the glow  
Of sunset on our mountains disappearing  
Is a new rose-red day  
On grander peaks than they,  
Peaks which my ardent swift fatigueless foot  
is nearing.

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TO ELLA DIETZ: POET AND  
ACTRESS.

I.

O dark-eyed singer  
And soft sweet bringer  
Of dreams that haunt us with dear white wings,  
Singer that comest  
From far and hummest  
The tune new to us that through thee rings,  
Lift us we pray thee,  
From day to day thee  
Seeking, as round us thy soft soul clings.

II.

In new sweet glowing  
Soft numbers flowing  
Sing to us of lands we ne'er have known ;  
Of rivers whose tides  
Lave measureless sides  
And lakes that put to the shame our own,  
And forests gigantic,  
And breathe the Atlantic  
Upon us in song, by the great winds blown.



III.

Thou bringest for dower  
 A new world's power  
 And thine own beauty of voice and heart ;  
 Gifted as thou,  
 With the genius-brow,  
 Why shouldst thou ever retreat, depart ?  
 Stay with us rather  
 Sweet one, and gather  
 Crowns for thy young head, crowns for thine Art.

IV.

Gather the flowers  
 Here growing from bowers  
 Wherein thy young fair feet shall tread ;  
 Lo ! England's pages  
 From far strange ages  
 Yearn for thee, burn for thee, wait to be read ;  
 The might of our race  
 Shall flame in thy face  
 And gird thee and arm thee and ring thine head.

V.

Thou comest to add  
 Thine own soul glad  
 Or sorrowful sometimes unto the few  
 Great women who live  
 With us ever and give  
 Their hearts so tender, so sweet of hue,  
 To the ages, to bless,  
 To heal and redress,  
 Whose souls are as song-birds heard in the blue.

## VI.

At seasons a queen  
Immortal, serene,  
Is sent by Apollo to lift and delight :  
Her golden hair  
Is his fetter, his snare,  
And it draws by its glory, allures by its might ;  
For a season she stands  
With his harp in her hands  
And we mark in her eyes the god's glance bright.

## VII.

So is it with thee :  
From over the sea  
Thou comest a new song bringing, divine ;  
The god in thine eyes  
As the sun in the skies,  
And the voice of the god in the sound of thy  
rhyme ;  
Black-haired, Apollo  
The gold-haired follow  
Towards heights yet grander, peaks more sublime.

## VIII.

With self-denial,  
Through pain, through trial,  
The high god follow, and work his will :  
Not those he chooses  
Whom pain refuses  
To crown,—not such doth the high god thrill ;  
Yea, those who would follow  
The steps of Apollo  
Must face the night-wind bitter and shrill.

IX.

Not in the daylight,  
 Fickle and gay light,  
 Are high crowns fashioned, and great songs sung :  
 Lo ! through the starlight  
 The gold-haired far light  
 Apollo is seen and his voice hath rung  
 Beneath the moonlight,  
 Breathing a tune light  
 Which round the red lips eddied and clung.

X.

If thou wilt find him,  
 Seize and wilt bind him,  
 High up the mountains, beneath the stars,  
 Follow thou fearless ;  
 The rough rocks cheerless  
 Traverse and heed not the moist fresh scars ;  
 High in the azure  
 Thou shalt have pleasure,  
 Beyond all limits, above all bars.

XI.

But few can follow  
 King-god Apollo ;  
 And of these singers, of women how few  
 There have been truly  
 Who faithfully, duly,  
 The great god served and his greatness knew ;  
 Wilt thou make over  
 As bard, as lover,  
 Thy soul to the song-god, canst thou be true ?

## XII.

Yea, true for ever,  
Though gladdened never  
By voice delusive of fluctuant praise  
Of dim-souled hearer ;  
Oh how far clearer  
Ring out Apollo's own splendid lays !  
The sun-god's kiss,  
Thou mayest have *this*,  
The sun-god's lips, and the song-god's bays.-

## XIII.

Lift up thy spirit,  
Make thine and inherit  
Our land's past story, our country's calm ;  
Let our seas gladden thee,  
Our sorrows sadden thee,  
Our summers soothe thee with waft of balm ;  
Our winters brace thee,  
Our hearts encase thee  
As thou our roses within thy palm.

## XIV.

Let every flower  
In every bower  
Of England greet thee with upturned face ;  
Róse and each lily  
And hair-bell hilly  
And delicate snowdrop's maiden grace ;  
And snow-drop girls  
With golden curls  
Brought for thy welcome from many a place.-

XV.

Thy voice shall reach us,  
 Thine heart shall teach us  
 Of things we know not : thy lyre shall sound  
 By the great white surges  
 The North wind urges  
 With terrible glee, as it shakes the ground ;  
 And in our summer  
 O sweet new-comer  
 Thy softer songs shall laugh and abound.

XVI.

Thyself a flower  
 Thy pure scent shower  
 O fair flower-singer about our shore :  
 A new scent tender  
 Of new strange splendour,  
 Sweet as the scents were gathered of yore  
 From the harp-swaying fingers  
 Of some three singers  
 Who sang the song-god's altar before.

XVII.

Some three or four,  
 Apollo no more  
 Took pains to nurture nor cared to crown :  
 They passed away from us  
 And took the day from us,  
 And all the leaves of our life were brown,  
 And autumn came  
 And the dead year's shame  
 At their departure and cold death's frown.

## XVIII.

Now, dark-cyed chanter,  
Be giver, be granter  
Of new spring to us ; bid England's plains  
At thy sweet footing  
Awake, forth-shooting  
New green shafts as at the soft spring-rains  
Bid summer blossoms  
Ope bright glad bosoms,  
And violets peep in the moist moss-lanes.

## XIX.

Arising later,  
Thou shalt be greater  
Than many and many who came and sang  
Till the high hills sounded  
As songs abounded,  
And the echoing sea-waves laughed and they rang:  
Thou shalt step higher,  
With more sweet fire  
Within thy spirit, more pure song-pang.

## XX.

Not bay-leaves olden  
But his own golden  
Dear locks Apollo shall bend and twine  
Within thy dark,  
Like many a spark  
Of flame-flies floating, let loose in thine :  
And an English rose  
In the dark hair glows  
To render it ever and ever divine.

TO KATHLEEN GORDON,  
GIRL-GENIUS.

I.

O girl-soul tender,  
And girl-form slender,  
What dreams have traversed from side to side  
Thy young fair being,  
Beyond our seeing—  
What thoughts have smitten with wing-wafts wide  
The moonlit ocean  
Of hopes in motion,  
Around thee surging in life's first pride.

II.

Dreaming for ever,  
Despairing never,  
How beautiful art thou, spirit divine !  
A blossom in girl-shape,  
Purer than pearl-shape,  
Born upon earth as a rose to shine ;  
Born to deliver  
The souls that quiver  
From arrows of life as from salt sea-brine.

## III.

Born to delight us  
With song-beams that smite us,  
Calm, gladden us, heal us—dreaming of things  
That men dream never  
And reach not ever  
With masculine strong stern struggle of wings ;  
Teacher of poet,  
Thou dost not know it,  
But sweet within thee our song-god sings.

## IV.

Sings, and he brings to us  
Tender soft wings, to us  
Showing delights new, found not of old ;  
In thy light fairy  
Dear diction airy  
The song-god speaks and his speech is of gold,  
And he laughs in laughter  
Of thine, and, after,  
He clings to us, sings to us, gentle but bold.

## V.

Thou wast a flower  
In some dim bower  
Of Paradise, doubt not ; now thou art here  
To sing for years to us,  
Laughter and tears to us,  
Spread forth thy pinions, and have no fear ;  
The airs will carry thee,  
Thy genius marry thee  
In thought to spirits whose songs are clear.



VI.

Whose songs are tender,  
 Grave, and of splendour  
 Divine in ages long past and dead :  
 Shelley shall sing to thee  
 And Keats' soul cling to thee ;  
 For robe and raiment, to crown thine head,  
 Thou shalt have glory  
 Of ages hoary,  
 The singing of past days round thee shed.

VII.

Hold to thy power  
 O girl, O flower,  
 Both firm and humble, both true and brave ;  
 Hearts thou shalt gladden,  
 Some souls perhaps sadden,  
 But more deliver and heal and save ;  
 Add to our pleasure  
 With thy sweet treasure  
 Of fancies bountiful, frolick or grave.

VIII.

Twine for our meadows  
 Sunbeams and shadows  
 Of delicate true song, as in the strain  
 Thou just hast given us,  
 Whose dart hath riven us  
 Wondering to find in the song-god's fane  
 So young a singer,  
 So sweet a bringer  
 Of gifts that only the young flowers gain.

## IX.

For only the singers,  
Young, sweet, are bringers  
Of all that falls from the high god's hand ;  
Yea, such souls only,  
Pure, wondrous, lonely,  
Before Apollo uncrowned, crowned, stand ;  
Crowned not as older  
Bards fiercer or colder,  
But crowned with rosebuds, band upon band.

## X.

Not e'en with bay-leaves,  
Sorrow's dark stray leaves,  
But only rosebuds bright as the morn,  
Bright as thine own heart ;  
Just as thou blown art  
Yesterday only, so these were born  
Yesterday, sweet one,  
Subtle and fleet one—  
From rose-twigs for thee were plucked and torn.

## XI.

Thy white brow bears yet  
No sign of cares, yet  
Some sorrow thy song would seem to pour ;  
Thou hast within thee  
Strange thoughts that win thee,  
Lure thee and draw thee to lands before ;  
To seasons unseen yet,  
Cloudless, serene yet,  
Towards passions the years yet garner in store.

XII.

O girl-heart dreaming  
 Of gold hair gleaming  
 And anthems swelling, and dark bright eyes,  
 Thy young life coming,  
 Like far wings humming  
 Above the blossoms 'neath sunstruck skies,  
 Hints of its wonder  
 Breathes—in the thunder  
 Of night, and the light of moons that rise.

XIII.

A flower thou blowest,  
 Just that,—nor knowest  
 The strange lands shadowed thy feet shall tread;  
 Best that thou know not,  
 While such skies glow not,  
 Fierce, sultry, scorching, above thine head;  
 The sunrise over thee  
 Shields, like a lover, thee;  
 What knowst thou, child-heart, of sunset red?

XIV.

Thou needst not linger  
 Pale sweet girl-singer  
 As yet, nor ponder by death's dark streams;  
 Yet, in thy singing  
 Their ripples ringing  
 Surge upward slowly, and softest dreams  
 Pour through thy yearning  
 Heart bounding and burning,  
 And crown thy spirit with weird sad gleams.

## XV.

Dreams thou hast fashioned,  
Tender, impassioned,  
Of death, of heaven, of things unseen ;  
But wings supremer  
O dear girl-dreamer  
Than angels' even shall o'er thee lean ;  
Love's plumes shall crown thee,  
In sweet joy drown thee,  
Ere death thou facest, soft and serene.

## XVI.

Ere death thou facest  
In love's thou placest  
Thy palm so trustful and towards love's eyes  
Thou gazest upward  
As heaven and hopeward,  
As towards star-blazoned and spotless skies :  
Not for us only  
The young song lonely  
On lonely wing-beats glitters and flies.

## XVII.

Thou shalt be flower  
In love's fair hour  
To those we see not—to him we see  
Not either ; lady  
Now 'neath the shady  
Dear branches supple of youth's slim tree  
Resting, and singing  
The soft songs clinging  
To girl-friends' spirits, to many, to me.

XVIII.

But dream thou onward  
 Moonward and sunward,  
 Starward and seaward, skyward,—and hold  
 Dear, dear, the flowing  
 Locks, golden, glowing,  
 Thy sweet songs tell of,—for nought but gold  
 Thou wilt, thou sayest ;  
 Thy voice delayest  
 Never for black locks, true to the old !

XIX.

Yet perhaps in ages  
 Which thy song-pages  
 Now dream not of, blue glances or brown  
 May flash above thee,  
 Wound thee, or love thee,  
 More than the looks which pain thee or crown  
 In soft white girlhood,  
 Jewel-hood, pearl-hood,—  
 Smile thee to heaven, or slay with a frown.

XX.

But howso be it  
 Thou mayest not flee it,  
 Thy song, thy mission of music and pain :  
 Pain ; for the poet  
 Must, heart-wrung, know it,  
 Or worthless, feeble and false, his strain :  
 Music ; for these\*  
 Songs blown on the breeze  
 In the heart of the world as a gift remain.

\* Poems, in MS., by Kathleen Gordon, aged fourteen.

## GOD AND BEAUTY.

What is the meaning of it all ?  
Surely God did not create  
Souls of His people in hate,  
Handing to instruments of fate,  
Binding in bitterness of thrall,  
His children ; giving us gall,

Gall to eat, vinegar to drink ;  
We who long for the eyes  
Of Beauty, and look to the prize  
That in arms of endurance lies,  
Neither from fires do we shrink ;  
Heart of not one of us flies.

If God is strong to succeed,  
Then we can trust and abide,  
Rest in the shadow of His side,  
Trust in the God we have tried,  
Careless, ready to bleed ;  
If He is strong to succeed.

Nothing we care for but this,  
That in harmony God shall bring  
Out of each of us some good thing,  
Tuning our voices to sing ;  
Beauty is one thing and bliss ;  
Nothing we care for but this.

Why did He give to us love,  
Only to take it away ?  
Love the light of a day,  
That lasts but the spring of a spray  
Beneath the feet of a dove ;  
Why did He give to us love ?

Love we have seen, and we know,  
Yea, we know she is fair ;  
Yea, we have woven her hair  
In our hands, and who shall compare  
To her limbs the new-fallen snow ?  
Love we have seen, and we know.

God we know not, neither see ;  
Neither in heaven, nor on earth ;  
News was there once of His birth,  
Men shook hands in their mirth,  
Women laughed in their glee ;  
Where now, tell us, is He ?

One thing we know, we are sad ;  
Yet the face we have seen  
Of Beauty, and hands of our Queen,  
And light of her eyes between  
Dark clouds and mists we have had,  
And sight of her garments' sheen.

If God loves her as we,  
And with His power (as they say,  
Strong as the might of the day)  
Brings her to pass as we pray,  
Souls of us calm can be ;  
If so He loves her as we.

We who love but the scent  
Of the wave of her hair in the way  
As the flowers the dawn of the day,  
Love her more than our words can say,  
And towards the road that she went  
Would fall on our knees and pray.

We who have given up all  
To be unto her as the dew  
To the sun ; who have sworn to be true ;  
We who are glad in the blue,  
But beneath the grey skies fall  
As a song-bird struck right through.

If God cares for her face  
Then we love Him, and stand  
Ready to cling to His hand,  
To be led of Him up to the land  
Of promise, His own fair place,  
A gladsome, a wished-for strand.

If God cares for her not,  
Neither is willing to bring  
Beauty in everything  
To be, let pale priests sing !  
Faces with tears we blot,  
Fingers of wailing we wring.

But one hope yet avails ;  
That out of the smoke and the dust:  
Blossom a rose-tree must ;  
This is the sole strong trust  
To close up a mouth that rails ;  
This one hope yet avails.



Hope that if we are cast down,  
All unable to stand,  
If our faces are fanned  
By fires of hell, and the land  
Is dark, yet God's is the crown  
And mighty His strong right hand.

Yea, if He treads upon us,  
Beautiful souls to make,  
Let us not tremble nor quake,  
Let us not quaver nor shake ;  
Little let God heed us,  
If Beauty our Queen is at stake !

She whom of all we adore ;  
Loving the feathers of her wings,  
Breath of the air where she sings,  
Sound of the motion she brings  
As she shakes the ethereal floor,  
And the light that about her clings.

Loving the light of her eyes  
As the bird the breath of the morn,  
As the hound the lilt of the horn,  
As the sun the beauty of dawn,  
The face of his bride in the skies  
By the mists of night from him torn.

As the sailors watching at night  
The first faint flush in the air  
Of the streaks of the wind-waved hair  
Of Aurora, and fingering fair  
Of the clouds touching in fresh light,  
As a sign to us all she is there.

As a man tired-out through the day  
The first fresh fall of the dews  
That give to a worker the news  
That at last he may cast off the shoes  
Of fatigue, and hasten away,  
Nor longer his rest refuse.

As a lover who has not seen  
For a weary sighing of years,  
For a long outpouring of tears,  
For a manifold mist of fears,  
The face of a maiden, a queen,  
Is glad, when her footstep nears.

As a mother, who longs for her son  
Gone to the fire of the wars,  
Gone as it were to the stars  
So the distance seems, that mars  
His features, is like to run  
To the sound of home-coming cars.

As all these love, we too  
Are in love with the face of our Queen,  
We poets ; we who have seen  
Her glory, the light of the sheen  
Of her raiment ; only a few  
In the print of her passing have been.

## SONNET.

### THE REVELATIONS OF THE AGES.

\*  
Strip off dead husks, the fruit will be the sweeter ;  
Shake out dead petals, brighter blooms the  
    rose ;  
Cast off the worn-out shoes, the feet are fleeter,  
Fitter to race along the road that goes,  
With many windings, toiling through the ages,  
Revealing ever newer points of view,  
Each turn unfolding fresh sweet landscape-pages,  
And broad descents, and hills and valleys new ;  
Places of which our fathers never dreamed,  
Strange, perilous, by feet of man untrod,  
And which to them impassable would have  
    seemed,—  
But which we have to traverse, trusting God,  
\*God who for certain leaves no single age  
Without its fitting revelation-page.

1870.

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## TO SHELLEY.

### I.

Thy spirit which trod,  
Gold-sandalled, a god,  
The grass, that blossomed beneath its tread,  
At Oxford and saw,  
Unsmitten of awe,  
The centuries gathered behind it in red  
Vast sunset-waves,  
Doth it live yet, and saves  
Immortal its glory among the dead?

### II.

The surf of the sea  
Of thought was to thee  
But calm clear ripples of inland lakes  
Wherein to delight  
With free-swimming might  
'Mid the blue dear surges and white foam-flakes :  
In the old grey town  
Thou plaitedst thy crown,  
Oxford, and threadedst its harsh thought-brakes.

## III.

God was to thee  
As the voice of the sea,  
As the wings of the surges, the plumes of the blast :  
Little indeed  
Of the tame pale creed  
That broods blood-stricken above the past  
Thy soul did reck ;  
Without rein, without check,  
It followed its own God-yearning vast.

## IV.

Marsh-marigolds  
Each dense dyke holds  
By Oxford, and long grass-fields at night  
Gleam weird and strange,  
And the low hill-range  
Is purple at sunset against the bright  
Sky orange or red ;  
And the moonrays wed  
O'er the silvery river the last faint light.

## V.

These thou didst see,  
And seen too of me  
Were the weird grey hollows, the wild long hills,  
The gleaming expanse  
Of the ripples that dance  
On Isis, and all that the swift gaze fills  
From Iffley to where  
The white waves tear  
At Sandford the foam that the fierce stream spills..

## VI.

Then thou didst fly  
The dim mist-sky  
Of England and sangest in Italy's vales,  
More sweet than the sound  
Heard there without bound  
As it throbs and rises, ascends and fails,  
Of the nightingale-song  
When its ecstasy strong  
Now triumphs and leaps, now weeps and wails.

## VII.

What didst thou know  
Of love? Was it woe,  
Or gladness passing the frail mute dream  
Of men who aspire  
But find not a lyre  
Like thine, so watch but thy gold harp-gleam  
As it glittereth swept  
By the fingers that slept,  
That rested, never from song's bright theme?

## VIII.

Oh, love to thee  
Was as soft as the sea  
At softest even : it was not the sound  
Of the fierce-tongued surges  
The fierce breeze scourges—  
It was as the blossoms that star the ground,  
Filled with perfume  
And glory of bloom,  
A mantle of beauty to plain and mound.

## IX.

Were the women who wove  
For thee raiment of love  
As stars of passion within thine hair ?  
Bright stars merely,  
Or loved more nearly—  
Who was thy bride, most sweet of the fair  
Women who gave  
Lips gracious to save,  
And filled thy summer with rose-sweet air ?

## X.

What laughter of bright  
Lips, beauty of white  
Limbs ever sufficed for, satisfied thee ?  
What rose was as red  
As thy dreams on it shed ?  
Yea, thy thoughts were more white than the waves  
of the sea,  
And the heavens unclear  
By thy song-sky dear,  
Wherethrough thou wast wont to exult and flee.

## XI.

What rich buds even  
In Italy's heaven  
Were rich as the buds in the dreams of thy song ?  
What marvellous flow  
Of ripples aglow  
Danced gold in the sunlight, white in the throng  
Of the white moonbeams,  
Through the winged soft dreams  
Of thy spirit alert, divine and strong ?

## XII.

Oh, blossoms indeed,  
A princely meed,  
Thou hast given us, Shelley : and skies and seas,  
And the voice of a rhyme  
Unending, sublime,  
And the laughter of fays in the leafage of trees,  
And the tidal motion  
Of song's sweet ocean,  
The glitter of insects, the humming of bees.

## XIII.

The universe  
In thy pure verse  
Gloweth and floweth, speaketh and sings :  
From rose to lily,  
From vale to hilly  
Far rock-bound region on far-spread wings  
Thou floatest and seizest  
What bloom thou pleasest ;  
Yea, what thou willest, thy quick harp brings.

## XIV.

And so in the sphere  
Of high thought, clear  
And brave thy voice is, fearless, unchained :  
Thou wast not afraid  
Of Calvary's shade ;  
Free on the hill-top thy foot remained :  
Thou wast not bound  
By the calm sweet sound  
Of Christ's voice, nor by the Church-crimes stained.



## XV.

Pure of the flood  
Of innocent blood  
Spilt by the Church thou wast : for a friend  
Christ thou knewest  
And in skies bluest  
Of great thought soughtest him, didst not bend ;  
Thy bright head never  
Need bend, nor ever  
Can Christ in the sheer song-land contend.

## XVI.

He hath his crown,  
And thou thine own,  
Shelley,—thy song-crown perfect indeed :  
His wreath of pain  
He hath, and his fane,  
And the thorns that yet on the white brow bleed ;  
But thou, an immortal,  
By thine own portal  
Mayest enter the gates of the God we need.

## XVII.

For England in song  
Untrammelled and strong  
Yearn we to hear now, not to be told  
Of deeds outworn,  
In a far land born ;  
We need but love, to our hearts to hold,  
And the lips of the rose  
That in England blows,  
Woman, sweeter than women of old.

## XVIII.

Not Palestine,  
Nor the fig and the vine,  
But the corn and the clover, the clear-eyed maid  
On the cliff-top standing  
With glance commanding  
Searching our broad seas,—the oak-trees' shade,  
The purple heather,  
The grey wild weather  
In England, the furze-crowned fern-lined glade.

## XIX.

This we need :  
Thou gavest a creed,  
Shelley, which brings us high help now ;  
God in the soul  
Of each, and the whole  
Of the leafy wide world, not one bough  
Of a palm-tree faded,  
And grasped in jaded  
Priest's hands—broken and tangled how !

## XX.

Thou wast the first  
Through whose song burst  
The chant of England, freeing her soul  
From the dry harsh letter,  
The ruinous fetter  
Of creeds that around her white limbs stole  
As ravening snakes  
In the dead-branch brakes :  
She gives thee her rose-heart, gives thee the whole !

## TO KEATS.

### I.

O crowned immortal  
Who through the portal  
Of life didst pass to a deathless tomb,  
Where art thou singing  
And thine hands bringing  
Immortals blossoms of grander bloom  
Than those that awoke  
At thy swift harp-stroke  
Ere our earth failed thee and rang thy doom ?

### II.

What dreams surrounded  
Thy young soul bounded  
And barred on all sides as thou didst sing.  
Of cowslip and daisy  
And spring morns hazy,  
Soft-brooding ever with young white wing:  
Above our meadows,  
And through time's shadows  
Moving, a song-god, an uncrowned king ?

## III.

What dreams we know not,  
Which thy songs show not,  
Filled thy young spirit and smote thine heart  
With stroke as of oars  
Nigh musical shores,  
Some with sweet pleasure and some with smart?  
What thoughts supreme  
In a flash, in a dream,  
Of love, of life, of thine own fair Art?

## IV.

Ne'er wast thou wingless,  
But alway stingless,  
Pure alway, gentle and tender and high :  
A poet indeed  
With thine heart for a creed  
And thy temple the uttermost deep blue sky,  
And the sound of the sea  
For hymnal to thee,  
And the voice of the breeze for thy soul's own sigh.

## V.

The stars were thine own  
And thy locks were blown  
By the wind of the night as a spirit indeed  
Of friendliest greeting ;  
Thy heart swift-beating  
Went traversing valley and dingle and mead,  
Finding in each  
Songs sweeter than speech  
Of the birds who sang to thee, tuned thy reed.

## VI.

Greek-souled, Greek-eyed,  
Thy spirit espied  
Things hidden from all of us, given to thee  
For balm and delight ;  
Full oft through the night  
Or the tangle of leaves 'mid the boughs of a tree  
Came nymphs new-risen  
For thee from their prison,  
And mermaids shone in the gulfs of the sea.

## VII.

The dead ideal  
To thee was real ;  
And real life gave thee one strange sweet dream :  
Thou diedst crying  
On one, far-flying  
In spirit to where our white waves gleam  
From Italy's shore ;  
One loved as of yore,  
And sought while launched upon death's still  
stream.

## VIII.

What hast thou now,  
Keats ? visited how  
Is the heaven-high spirit by love's glance bright ?  
What tresses are fair  
In the summer-soft air,  
More summer-soft ever for pulse of the flight  
Of song-woven pinions  
Which flood the dominions  
Of death with torrents of golden light ?

## IX.

Hath thy kiss lighted  
Soft and invited  
On dear lips redder than lips of queens  
Who make this earth to us  
Gracious in mirth, to us  
Bringing the glory of all sweet scenes ?  
Whom hast thou wedded,  
White-souled, gold-headed ?  
What breast above thee with rapture leans ?

## X.

Oh, are they fairer,  
Those queens, and rarer  
In passionate beauty than flowers below  
Loved and proclaimed of us ?  
Are they ashamed of us ?  
Seek they for singers whose lips they know  
In heaven, and we hear not,  
Worship, revere not,—  
Scorn they the passions our songs bestow ?

## XI.

Hath love the splendour,  
The dear glow tender,  
In heaven that crowns us toiling and tired ?  
Hast thou Keats fashioned  
New lyrics impassioned,  
By love of celestial sweet eyes fired ?  
Now is thy song  
As soft and more strong,  
By the women of deathland sought and inspired ?

## XII.

Oh are they sweet  
With lily-clear feet,  
And lips like the scent of the first May rose  
In a shower at morn ;  
And their laugh is it born  
In the high pure air where no frail foot goes,  
But only the singer's  
Firm step that lingers  
Gentian-like 'mid the untouched snows ?

## XIII.

Thy dreams now are blessed,  
Thy soul is at rest  
Having passed from the earth where never a bard  
Hath trodden save sadly,  
Endlessly, madly,  
To struggle in fate's steel bondage hard,  
Till sweet death came  
And her plumage of flame  
Left the prison-barriers crushed and charred :

## XIV.

Then comes the sky,  
The night wind's sigh,  
The sense of release and the leaves of the trees  
Tenderly dancing  
And gold stars glancing  
O'er billows of limitless fetterless seas,  
And the terrible gladness,  
Transfiguring sadness,  
Of visions of moonlit and measureless leas.

## XV.

One day to each of us,  
Close, within reach of us,  
Comes the waft of the rose-like breath  
Of the passionate bride  
For whom we have sighed,  
Yea, the passionate exquisite bosom of death,  
And the lips of the night  
Soft, flower-light,  
And the word that the night's mouth whispering  
saith.

## XVI.

Then shall we see  
The kingdom of thee,  
Keats? all thy treasure uncounted, untold?  
Thy brides in the sky  
And thine ecstasy high,  
And thy laughter as tender and clear as of old,  
And thy singing supreme,  
Like love's through a dream,  
Rich from thy god's mouth moulded of gold.

## XVII.

Or hast thou found  
And conquered and bound  
Some sweet flower-singer as soft and as young  
In heaven, and chained her,  
Loved and retained her  
For ever while ever thy glad lips sung  
Perfect, divine to her,  
Sweet line by line to her—  
Wonderful honeyed decoys of thy tongue?



## XVIII.

Oh, is she listening,  
The soft eyes glistening  
At all the magic of thy fond strain ?  
Now no more lonely  
Thou art but only  
Alone with one in the love-god's fane :  
Rested at last  
With sorrow in the past  
Dead, while the flowers of the past remain.

## XIX.

Through the soft June light,  
Summer clear moonlight,  
Conquering spirits, I cry to your land :  
Crown us at last too,  
Suffering the blast too  
Of sorrow ; stretch down a white strong hand  
To singers who need  
Your presence indeed,  
Who yet uncrowned on the dim earth stand.

## XX.

O bride of Keats  
Whose heart now beats  
For the singer whose spirit knows pain no more,  
Remember that we  
'Mid the waves of the sea  
Of time yet struggle,—hear thou the roar  
Of the breakers : oh aid  
Till we too have made  
The ultimate haven, the sorrowless shore !

## THREE SONNETS.

### I.

#### THE CHRISTS OF THE AGES.

There are whose spirit-pangs do far exceed  
The pangs the Hebrew weaveth in his crown :  
Not on one Son of God high God smiled down,  
But such throughout the foolish centuries bleed.  
Oh, thrice accursed is the small diin creed  
That cramps its votaries' souls before one  
Cross ;  
Poor mole-eyed spirits ! they count all suffer-  
ings dross  
Save Christ's,—the English blood-rose but a  
weed !

The Christs o' the ages, men and women fair  
In spirit as was Christ, or fairer far,  
Are crucified indeed—no perfumed air  
Of incense-worship crowns them, and no star  
Gleams apostolic, fiery, o'er their head :  
Men worship not ; God worships them instead.

*(Written on the eve of Good Friday, March 25, 1880.)*

## II.

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF MANHOOD.

*(For Good Friday, 1880.)*

To-day, as ever, pale mankind is nailed  
Upon the bitter cross ; the people go  
To weep false tears o'er overrated woe,—  
Weeping because one far-off fair life failed.  
And what of heights of manhood left unscaled  
To-day, because this piteous farce runs so ?  
What of the sufferers dying beneath snow  
Of want of love to-day, by no hymns hailed ?

Ah ! shall there be an Easter morn for these,  
As through the blood-stained centuries not one  
day  
Hath not loomed like Good Friday gaunt and  
grey  
Upon them ; from grim immemorial seas  
Of timeless suffering, grievous, marred and  
wan,  
What Easter torch shall light the spirit of  
man ?

## III.

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF WOMANHOOD.

And what of woman? Shall she not arise  
    Splendid as risen Christ on Easter morn,—  
    Seeking, dew-kissed, sun-crowned, a flower-  
        new-born,  
Untraversed haunts of unfamiliar skies?  
Shall not the sweet God shine within her eyes?  
    Shall not her swordless white hand laugh to  
        scorn  
    The pale black-armoured foes who would have  
        torn  
Her banner down, that floated lily-wise?

Oh, Christ is risen; leave his grave in peace.  
    Rise thou, O woman, from thine own poor  
        dreams;  
    Lo! even for thee an Easter morning gleams  
Triumphant, and thine utter woes shall cease  
    Mayhap: no more shall flow the sacred blood  
    Of crucified, sad, tortured womanhood.

*(Written on Easter Eve, March 27, 1880.)*

TO WOMAN.

I.

Not of any wonder  
High in heaven clear,  
Soaring beyond thunder,  
Making for man's ear  
Music that falls divinely through the azure sheer..

II.

Not of any skylark  
High in heaven I sing :  
Loftier than the high lark  
With my songful wing  
I would sail, glad-seeking yet a fairer thing.

III.

Fairer thing, and sweeter  
Than the lark at dawn ;  
Tenderer, completer,  
Out of God's heart gone ;  
More silver-voiced than birds, swift-footed as a  
fawn.

IV.

Glorious in the azure,  
White above the sea,  
Man's supremest pleasure,  
Grand in purity,  
Woman thou art: and heaven I find, in seeking thee..

## V.

Wonderful thy song is,  
Fairer than the lark ;  
Tender it and strong is,  
Bursting through the dark,  
Till all the heavens for wonder hush themselves  
and hark.

## VI.

Marvellous thy singing ;  
Sweet thy snow-white form,  
Ever to man's clinging,  
Faithful through each storm,  
Every surge of anguish, tender still and warm.

## VII.

Through the night of trouble,  
Through thy long sad past,  
Thou hast sung ; now double,  
Sweet, thy song at last ;  
Sing, for thy night is over, thine enemies down-  
cast.

## VIII.

Sing in the glad clear morning,  
O woman-spirit,—sing :  
Thy life-long sorrows scorning ;  
Soft-brushing with white wing  
Aside each hindering hostile pestilential thing.

## IX.

Bring to man the gladness  
That he fain would know ;  
Banish all our sadness ;  
Make an end of woe ;  
Create a perfect heaven amid thy bowers below.

## X.

Sweet, create God's heaven,  
Golden, glad, and clear,  
In earth's valleys even ;  
Yea, love, even here :  
Bring the divine redemption with thy presence  
near.

## XI.

Be to man a saviour  
Gentle-souled and white,  
Sweet in pure behaviour,  
Glad in modest might ;  
Assert thy woman's sceptre, claim thy queenly  
right.

## XII.

Be to earth a blossom  
Soft, divine indeed ;  
Take man to thy bosom,  
Man, in utmost need ;  
Give to his endless yearning, gentle lady, heed.

## XIII.

Build thy bower of roses,  
Golden, sweet, divine  
On earth : where love reposes  
'Neath ivy and woodbine  
Build thou thy palace, made imperishably thine.

## XIV.

Let thy wondrous singing  
Sound o'er earthly seas ;  
Lo ! thy voice is ringing  
Silver in each breeze  
Of summer, and amid the green thick-foliaged  
trees.

## XV.

God in thee revealing  
All his tender grace  
Shines ; his love is stealing,  
Love, throughout thy face ;  
Thine hand upon earth's meadows, blossoms in  
each place.

## XVI.

Where thou art, the lily  
Straightway doth appear ;  
Roses o'er the hilly  
Rocky fields and sheer  
Bloom ; thou bringest eternal glory, sweetheart,  
here.



## XVII.

All my song I render,  
Lady, unto thee ;  
Worshipping thy splendour,  
All thy purity :  
Listening to thy low laughter and thy magic glee.

## XVIII.

All the bending glory  
Of the golden corn,  
Crests of billows hoary,  
Crimson clouds at morn,—  
And all earth's countless splendours, for thy sake  
are born.

## XIX.

Not, like Shelley's wonder,  
Singing in the sky,  
Not sad thoughts from yonder  
Bringest thou, sweet, nigh ;  
But only utter gladness laughing in thine eye.

## XX.

Only utter gladness  
Sounding in thy voice,  
Now thy former sadness  
Letteth thee rejoice,  
Having fled back for ever, like a tempest-noise.

## XXI.

Bring us sweet redemption,  
Sweet one, in thy breast;  
Virtue, and exemption  
From the weary quest  
For what might be more fitting, what the eternal  
best.

## XXII.

Thou the eternal best art,  
Thou the endless queen,  
Thou man's perfect rest art,  
Tender, white, serene,  
The sweetest of all songsters that have ever been.

## XXIII.

Sweetest of all singers,  
Softest of all birds,  
Flowers within thy fingers,  
Laughter in thy words,  
Lo ! for thy service now his sword man's spirit  
girds.

## XXIV.

Not an angel—fairer ;  
Lovelier, thou art :  
Not a skylark—rarer ;  
Gifted with a heart  
Even more full of songs that down the deep blue  
dart.

## XXV.

All my heart and fire  
Unto thee I bring;  
Bless thou, love, my lyre,  
Let it nobly sing  
Thee the eternal queen of every poet-king.

## XXVI.

All my yearning spirit,  
Love, to-night I raise;  
Let my soul inherit  
At the end of days  
That heaven whence thou stoopest, coveting our  
lays.

## XXVII.

For our lays thou lovest,  
Though thou art a queen,  
Woman; though thou movest  
Over floors serene,  
Golden in skies untroubled, measureless in sheen.

## XXVIII.

Yea, our songs thou hearest,  
And thou dost bestow  
Power; yea, love, thou carest  
For thy bards below  
Snatching at sacred joys they may not fully know.

## XXIX.

O thou rose eternal,  
Heavenly love, made fair  
Not as flowers diurnal,  
Filling all the air  
Of utter heaven with fragrance passing man's  
speech rare ;

## XXX.

Take this song and bear it  
Through the clouds of night ;  
For thy garland wear it,  
Smile with smile most bright  
Upon my soul, and make it, as thy soul is, white !

---

## TO THE ENGLISH POETS OF THE PAST.

Ye whose lips were wet  
With the self-same sea,  
Hearken unto me :  
Let now my voice by your victorious harps be met.

Ye too struggled on ;  
Following after fame  
Till at length it came—  
But came not till your mortal shapes were dead  
and gone.

Ye too loved and spake  
In the English air :  
Found the same flowers fair ;  
Marked the same tides upon the same white cliff-  
sides break.

Ye too in your time  
Knew love's wonder here :  
Found love's message dear ;  
Recorded love's worth in imperishable rhyme.

Oh that in the end  
I may join, I too,  
You great voice,—and you,—  
May touch the hands of many a true bay-wreathèd  
friend !

Surely with the same  
Passion of pure love  
Which your hearts did move,  
I too love the shores wherein ye won your fame.

Singing in an age  
When the noises sharp  
Drown out many a harp,  
Imperious battle harder than your war we wage.

Yea, if but one heart  
Doth respond to ours,  
Resting in our bowers  
Of song, it is reward thought great for living Art.

Yea, if but one hears ;  
And if dead we find  
All the bards who twined  
Round their brows of old the laurels of past  
years—

If but these we find  
Gladdened by our song,  
All our souls are strong  
To face the bitter days of obloquy unkind.

For the self-same land  
Shall receive our word,  
Over which was poured  
The sacred stream of song from many a former  
hand.

And though in our day  
Listeners are but few,  
Splendid is too  
The victory of the voice which nothing can gain-  
say.

The victory of the harp  
Sure-voiced as the sea :  
O'er which there can be  
No mist nor vapour flung by foolish tongues that  
carp.

O great English bards  
Grant us in the end  
Triumph, and extend  
To each who struggleth now 'mid waves whose  
force retards,

As each soul deserves,  
Greeting from on high,  
Help, and victory ;  
If but to the utter end each battles on, nor  
swerves.

---

## SO HE CEASED TO BELIEVE IN MAN.

A thinker, young, was worried and stung  
By gibes of friends and priests ;  
The peace he sought could not be brought  
By pleasure or jovial feasts ;  
A peace they proffered, a rest they offered  
Far from the battle's van—  
So he ceased to believe in Man !

He ceased to believe in Man and receive  
The gifts Man has to hold :  
The strong despair whose face is fair,  
Yea, sweeter than wrought gold ;  
The endless scope of desperate hope ;  
The proud Church waved her fan—  
So he ceased to believe in Man !

He could no more upon the shore  
Delight in ocean's waves ;  
He could no longer stand far stronger  
Than foam-white leagues of graves ;  
His power was spent, his head was bent,  
He trembled, pale and wan—  
So he ceased to believe in Man !



The glorious earth no more with mirth  
 Unutterable delayed him :  
 The pleasant flowers and woodbine bowers  
 Had all, he thought, betrayed him ;  
 The roses red were fickle and dead ;  
 He could not life's girth span—  
 So he ceased to believe in Man !

The wondrous sound of music bound  
 His being now in vain ;  
 A woman's eyes (wherein there lies  
 A cure for every pain)  
 Could not entreat, were no more sweet ;  
 He failed their depth to scan—  
 So he ceased to believe in Man !

And heaven-sent love was but a dove,  
 No lustre on its pinions ;  
 The struggle of thought went all for nought,  
 The woods were death's dominions ;  
 The azure sky was hollow and dry,  
 Earth groaned beneath a ban—  
 So he ceased to believe in Man !

---

## SO HE ENTERED THE CHURCH OF ROME.

Then pale priests came with comfort tame  
But grateful to his soul ;  
They offered him a temple dim,  
They brought an honeyed bowl ;  
He could not shrink, he chose to drink ;  
He sought a quiet home—  
So he entered the Church of Rome !

He ceased to plead, he ceased to bleed,  
He cannot struggle now ;  
He cannot fight, he has lost the light,  
It flames not on his brow ;  
Far from the rattle of earth's wild battle  
His frail feet longed to roam—  
So he entered the Church of Rome !

He longed for peace and calm release  
From all the labour of thought ;  
He longed for pleasure and gentle leisure—  
He has found the gifts he sought :  
High thought is curbed, he is not disturbed ;  
He yearned for a painted dome—  
So he entered the Church of Rome !

His heaven is sure, his bliss secure,  
The angels wait for him ;  
His harp is ready beyond the eddy  
Of death's stream cold and dim ;  
His bright robe waits beyond the gates  
Of heaven : he shunned life's foam—  
So he entered the Church of Rome !

His joy is certain : he draws the curtain  
On earth, and its windy fate ;  
He cares not now what furrows plough  
Our foreheads, what sore weight  
Of trouble and care we have to bear ;  
His feet stuck in earth's loam—  
So he entered the Church of Rome !

He shrank from thought—the terror it brought,  
Its passionate joy as well :  
He shall not see the life of the free,  
His high Church is his hell ;  
He shall not enter the fair centre  
Of Man's perfect home,  
Far from the Church of Rome.

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## CHRIST AND WOMAN.

Are there not, O king,  
King of many lands,  
Brooding with broad wing  
Over seas and sands,  
Free yet from thine hands,  
Full many shores whereto free joyous spirits cling?

Are there not, O lord  
Of the church-fed air  
Which is round us poured  
For our birth-day fare  
In England everywhere,  
Yet souls untrammelled girt with courage for a  
sword?

If our women find  
In thee all they seek,  
Deaf and pale and blind,  
Noble not but weak—  
Yet hath not some cheek  
Of woman flushed for love of her own kith and  
kind?

If our churches groan  
With the praise they pour  
In their weary tone  
On thee evermore,  
Yet hath not some shore  
Crowns of another Christ, and other worship  
known ?

Is the rose more red  
Since the Saviour's birth ?  
Or the lily's head  
Tenderer in worth ?  
Greener is the earth ?  
Doth any Lazarus here come smiling from the  
dead ?

Do the loaves increase  
For *our* needy crowd ?  
Do our terrors cease ?  
Doth the ghostlike shroud  
Of sorrow at the loud  
Mandate of any Christ divide, disclosing peace ?

Have the high sheer waves  
At Christ's bidding spared  
Seamen,—have the graves  
That their gulfs prepared  
Yielded souls that dared  
To tempt the awful deep back from their frothy  
caves ?

Have the breakers stood  
Silent at the touch  
Of a Saviour good,  
Rescuing from their clutch  
Souls he valued much?  
Have blossoms burned new-born on rods of barren  
wood?

Hath the grave again  
Opened to set free  
Any sons of men,—  
Given to liberty  
Any soul that we  
Have marked its iron bars and bitter paling pen?

What hath Christ for these  
English yearning souls  
Done that they should cease,  
As the world-wave rolls  
Onward over shoals  
And sunken reefs, to seek in their own spirits  
peace?

Peace within the shores  
Where their life was born,  
Over which God pours  
Crimson blush of morn,  
Which he clothes with corn,—  
Round which their sails are white, and round  
which throb their oars.

Pleasure in the land  
That indeed their own  
They may call, and stand  
On it as a throne,  
By its breezes blown,  
Girt with its cliffs and yellow wastes of sea-  
washed sand.

Oh, is this not ours,  
All this island-shore ?  
Green and glad with bowers ;  
Undismayed by war ;  
Over which there pour  
Fresh from God's fruitful hand the ever-fruitful  
showers.

Is it not thine own,  
Brother ? why then seek  
Alien shores and groan,  
Awe-struck at the peak  
Of Sinai, or some creek  
Whose rocky bluffs once rang to Christ's alluring  
tone ?

Why this discontent ?  
Why this wild desire,  
Longing ever bent  
With increasing fire  
On an Eastern lyre,  
That wayward and harsh-toned uncertain instru-  
ment ?

.

Are not the strong seas  
Of our pent-up coast  
Touched by wintry breeze  
Music deep ? a host  
Of singers we may boast,  
Yea, may not we ?—the birds among our summer  
trees ?

And have not we the grace  
Of perfect womanhood  
Among us—yea, each face,  
Sweet and pure and good,  
Womanly in mood,  
Brings God before us, God made plain in every  
place.

Christs we have, and kings :  
Women-Christs divine,  
Bearing snowier wings  
Than the wings that shine,  
Noble in outline,  
Upon the Christ who on the rain-dyed gibbet  
swings.

Is not Woman more  
Even than the rose ?  
Shall she not, too, soar  
Past all earthly woes,  
Till bright gates disclose  
In heaven heroic hearts for her too to adore ?



Are not her lips sweet,  
And her tresses fair?  
And shall she retreat,  
Hustled through the air,  
When her foes declare  
That God's step sounds alone in Christ's ap-  
proaching feet?

Is not every bride  
Unto us as pure  
As the Christ who sighed  
In the groves obscure  
Where e'en now endure  
Stories that drip with blood, memories of how he  
died?

Did he rise alone?  
Shall not we too rise  
To our fitting throne,  
Triumph in our eyes,  
Cleaving sundered skies,—  
Have we not too the Father, and his glory  
known?

Hath the Father one  
Only child and heir?  
Favourite chief son,  
Who alone may share  
All the treasures fair  
Amassed since first his Sire creative toil begun?

Shall not Woman rise  
    Bursting all the bars  
That now mock her sighs,  
    Sweep along the stars—  
    All that stays and mars  
Long left behind in lower undertrodden skies ?

Shall she not surpass  
    Saviours and ascend  
To the seas of glass,  
    All high heaven for friend ?  
    Is there any end  
To blossoms that smile upward, round her, from  
    the grass ?

Hath the Holy Ghost  
    Not a cliff-top lair  
Somewhere in our coast ?  
    Is not English air  
    Sweet enough and fair  
Enough to bring down many a bright angelic  
    host ?

White and pure indeed  
    Are the angels seen  
With us, whose feet bleed  
    'Mid the grasses green ;  
    Thick clouds fail to screen  
From us high heaven ; we have the angel-help we  
    need.

Not in this our age  
Did the Christ-king rise :  
Not his war we wage  
'Neath our stormier skies,  
Echo not his sighs ;  
Contend not, as did he, with winds' and waters'  
rage.

Rather in the stress  
Of our surging thought  
Struggle we no less :  
No less hearts have brought  
Purified of aught  
That might obscure or cloud the faith our tongues  
confess.

The utter faith in man  
And the Power that leads  
Onward through life's span  
Man,—who toils and bleeds,  
Suffers and succeeds,  
Completes at last the work his birthday breath  
began.

Faith in the great soul  
Human, and the Power  
Latent in the whole,  
Sweet in the rose-bower,  
Tender in love's hour,  
Who, silent, works on towards the foreseen cer-  
tain goal.

Faith in man's soul's light,  
And the perfect doom  
Of day to follow night;  
Night again with gloom  
To rest us, and entomb  
The sadness of the day, healing with gentle might.

Faith in the course of things,  
Certain and sublime,  
Towards the utmost springs  
Of morning: towards a clime  
Sunnier, and a rhyme  
Beating more gladsome yet through broad crea-  
tion's wings.

Therefore not one King  
Worship we, but crown  
Man, and 'neath man's wing  
Gladly rest,—and down  
Towards life's furrows brown  
We look; no more our hands round heaven's  
flower-stalks cling.

Woman we elect  
Tender snow-white queen:  
Man, the lord, is decked  
Now in lordly sheen;  
Priests who came between  
Man and the Power that made, with anger we  
reject.

For God's mouth shall bend,  
Tender, unto each,  
Kissing each as Friend,  
If we will but reach  
Upward, and beseech,  
Fearless, the Power that wrought, to mould us to  
the end.

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## TO APOLLO.

### I.

O King Apollo  
O'er mount and hollow  
Do I not follow with weary feet?  
Do I, pursuer,  
Where skies are bluer  
And meadows softer, recede, retreat?  
Thy gold hair flaming  
In front flight shaming  
Leads onward ever, than stars more sweet.

### II.

How many follow  
Thee, lord Apollo,  
Yet lay no hands on thy garments' hem!  
They sink down weary  
By road-side dreary,  
Sink, and the world hears nought of them:  
Their harps are taken,  
Their god forsaken,  
And the austere lips of the god condemn.

## III.

O condemnation •  
From heaven-high station  
Severely spoken,—O gold-haired king!  
Let me swerve never  
But, patient ever,  
At thy feet or in thy pathway sing :  
Sing by the meadows,  
And through the shadows,  
Soft-brushing grasses with ghost-like wing.

## IV.

By river flowing,  
By white tide glowing  
Of ocean's margent, by mead and rill ;  
By star-lit valleys  
Whence thy foot sallies  
O sudden song-god and all is still ;  
By dawn, by daylight,  
By gold star-ray-light,  
By sweet moon-beam-light ; 'neath shade of hill :

## V.

'Mid grass, 'mid clover,  
Swift-foot, a rover,  
'Mid golden ranks of the gold-haired corn—  
Gold-haired as thou  
Of the snow-white brow  
Whence all the music of earth was born—  
Through darkness deep  
When frail souls sleep,  
At murky midnight, at crimson morn :

## VI.

Through youth, through seasons  
When love's swift treasons  
Are surging round us like waves of seas ;  
Through manhood's stiller  
Strong years O filler  
Of all the air with the song of the breeze—  
Through life to death  
Let thy sweet song-breath  
Lift me and waft me whither it please !

## VII.

I dread not sorrow  
If by it I borrow  
A strength more ample, a lyre more true ;  
If by the pain-wave,  
The red blood-rain-wave,  
My wings more potent, invade the blue  
Of loftier heaven ;  
Then would I even  
'Mid pangs my tremulous song renew.

## VIII.

But surely, surely,  
Patiently, purely,  
I *have* thee followed, O lord, O king!  
I have not trembled,  
Nor quaked, dissembled  
Before the world,—but the deep pure thing  
Thou gavest me, loudly,  
Strongly and proudly,  
I have not ceased, through life, to sing.



## IX.

I have not lost it,  
Nor blurred nor crossed it  
With threads invasive of mere self-will ;  
My message clearly  
Have spoken—nearly  
The sole night-singer when all was still  
In the hushed dark sometimes ;  
Till there would come times  
When all thy woods loud lyres would fill.

## X.

The gift thou gavest  
Among the bravest,  
The dearest, sweetest, of loves and friends,  
I've used ; not heeding  
Feet full-of't bleeding  
And heart that the world's sharp spear-head rends :  
Now may I rest  
On the night's dim breast  
As at thy coming my pale chant ends.

## XI.

Lo ! thou appearest  
Apollo and clearest  
The heaven above thee with awful might :  
The clouds before thee  
Retreat—high o'er thee  
Within thy tresses the sun flames bright :  
And the seas thy footing  
Follow with floating  
Ripples of august golden light.

## XII.

Now let me, weary,  
The black night dreary  
Evade for ever, now thou art here :  
My song is ended  
Now, fierce, extended  
Across the skies thy white steeds rear !  
My song is over  
Now thou, song's lover,  
As gold-haired bridegroom dost appear.

## XIII.

Take my pale singing :  
Let some notes ringing  
High upward, skyward, remain, abide :  
But oh thy laughter  
So sweet, comes after,  
So silver-clear o'er the charmed sea-tide ;  
And what can singers  
Of earth with fingers  
Feeble fashion for song thy bride ?

## XIV.

Is she too golden  
Of locks, and holden-  
Within her hands is a harp-stem true?  
Or black-haired rather,  
Nereus her father,  
Did she step forth from the sea-caves blue  
With musical feet  
Apollo to meet,—  
With grey glance subtle, snow-white of hue ?

## XV.

Yea, she was gracious  
Within the spacious  
Deep domes of singing beneath the waves;  
And what can our song,  
Our pale earth's flower-song  
That twines with roses the grass of graves  
Be to the tender  
And soft-voiced splendour  
Of white seas breaking in dim sea-caves?

## XVI.

Yet hear our flower-song,  
Our red-rose-bower song,  
And take it tenderly, great song-king;  
For there are in it  
Not chirp of linnet  
And song-thrush only, but notes that ring  
Forth sweeter, greater  
Than these O hater  
Of all things little, O gold of wing!

## XVII.

Not songs that languish  
But deep heart-anguish  
And throbs unspoken of nights and days,  
These, these, we bring thee  
And with them ring thee,  
Not with the flower-stalks, not with the bays:  
Oh bend Apollo  
And hear the hollow  
Groan of the earth's voice, take it as praise.

## XVIII.

While thou wast wedded,  
Our groans have eddied  
From lonely bosoms upon the breeze :  
While thou wast toying  
With thy bride, cloying  
Thy soul with sweetness, our soul did freeze,  
Pallid and crownless  
And naked, renownless,  
Hopeless as arms of the storm-lashed trees !

## XIX.

Therefore remember  
With us December  
Abides while summer O gold-haired king  
Is with thee alway,  
And thy bright hallway  
With laughter of red lips laughs and may ring :  
Alone not ever  
Thou wast,—yea never  
With lone lips hadst thou had heart to sing.

## XX.

So when thou flamest  
In dawn and aimest  
Thy final arrows at earth's last night,  
Forget not those who  
In pain arose,—who  
Sang to thee, song-god, when nought was bright  
Save only the endless  
Love then thought friendless  
Wherewith they longed for thee, longed for thy  
light.

*Feb. 10, 1880.*

## TO GERTRUDE ENTERING A CONVENT.

Ah! weak and frail—but yet so sweet, so pure!  
Thou art English, rosebud! yet could'st not endure  
The strong salt breeze, but must thy soul secure  
    Within these close-barred flowerless scentless  
        gates.

Thou art English: yet the sweet and stalwart  
    breeze  
That laughs delighted 'mid our bright oak trees  
And sweeps across the emerald lavish leas  
    Thou could'st not bear; what breeze thy coming  
        waits?

O all shut in apart from suns and stars  
Within these bloomless barren spouseless hars,  
How black a cowardly crime thy girlhood mars,  
    Thine English girlhood, spoilt by froward fates!

How deep a weak-souled crime thy life begins!  
How crowned thy forehead is with others' sins!  
Oh, if the eternal Bridegroom thee, sweet, wins,  
    Thou art not won, if love's pursuit abates!

Yea, if love's English foot throughout the gloom  
Thee follows not, nor cares to seek thy tomb,  
Thou art lost—yea, lost, for all the hectic bloom  
    That heaven upon thy pale cheek reinstates.

Thou art lost, abandoned, sold : thy body young  
That English true lips might have loved and sung  
Is buried deep, deep ; round thy neck have clung  
Foul serpents of the dusk, like hissing hates.

O flower, white flower, why wilt thou thus away ?  
O rose, sweet rose, why will thy footsteps stray ?  
Lo ! night before thee lies, but crimson day  
Behind ; oh pause ere yet the last bolt grates.

O blossom, blossom, wandering down the track,  
Alone, uncherished, wilt thou not turn back ?  
Thou know'st not yet how dark it is alack !  
Within that vault thy purpose meditates.

By every English rose of thee a part  
Pause maiden, slaughter not thy young fair heart :  
Yea, drop from thy white hand the priest-forged  
dart ;  
Lo ! rose-like love thy being renovates.

By every English woman glad and strong  
Hear thou the swift notes of an English song :  
Do not thy white soul this unfathomed wrong :  
Do England's soul no wrong ; heed not these  
baits.

The great white soul of England calleth thee :  
In every white wave of the thundering sea  
Its mandate sounds ; it sounds again through me ;  
Pause, ere thine hand thine own soul dissipates.

Pause, Gertrude ; by thine own dear English name  
That burns our hearts with longing like a flame  
Do not thy soul and England's soul this shame :  
Pause, ere thy fall our foemen's craving sates.

## A WHITE ROSE IN NOVEMBER.

I thought it was summer when I saw the white  
rose !

Oh can it be November, when so bright a blossom  
glows ?

The tender blossom-maiden I place within my  
song,

To bloom therein, and smile therein, the whole  
year long !

It cannot be November, it must be tender June :  
The birds amid the tree-tops will wake and whisper  
soon :

The seas, blue-bright for summer, will chant their  
chorus strong

And flowers will crown our foreheads, the glad  
year long !

Oh summer ever reaches us, if but a summer-  
maid,

Sweet June wreathed in her tresses, gold August  
in each braid,

Smiles, laughs ; if but her accents, so silver-sweet  
and clear,

Bring all the songs of spring-time, yea, every  
throstle, near.

I knew it was summer when I saw the white  
rose !

Through not another blossom so sweet a beauty  
glows ;

I know not any blossom so tender-sweet and  
white,

Though many blossoms richer have flamed upon  
my sight.

It always must be summer when the white rose  
sings,

With music in her outspread sun-seeking petal-  
wings !

It always must be summer where the white rose  
gleams,

For summer's self pursues her and glitters in her  
dreams.

O white rose, white rose, soon you will be far  
From England and my singing ; but watch some  
clear glad star

That shineth over England above the Indian sea  
And send your love, soft, star-like, by that glad  
star to me.

O white rose, white rose, soon you will be wed,  
And all our days of laughter and singing will be  
dead ;

But white rose, white rose, take my kiss away  
Hid soft amid your petals, and therein let it stay !



Hid sweet amid your petals; oh therein let it  
rest,

White rose, white rose, as in a scented nest  
Of young soft blessed fragrance; and when you  
watch the foam

That breaks o'er Indian sand-banks, wave hands to  
me at home!

*Nov. 16, 1878.*

## TO CHRIST.

Have we not garlands in these latter days  
Whether of gold or rosebuds or of bays—

Have we not fitting joys and loves to treasure—  
Snow-stars of winter, green light spring-tide  
sprays,

Passion with heart-throbs tender beyond  
measure ;

Friendship of manhood, woman's love and praise ?

Have we not white seas beating round our shores  
And in our ironbound creeks the throb of oars ?

Have we not all the early summer sweetness  
Of morning, and delight that even pours

Upon us at the burning day's completeness—  
And the same sunset's cloud-built golden doors ?

What is there wanting ? Are the skies not gold ?  
The clouds not tipped with crimson as of old ?

Is the gold hair of women grown less ample—  
The fire of love a worn-out thing and cold—

Yea, do the heavy-footed centuries trample  
All that humanity would clasp, enfold ?

May we not mark within our own grey sea  
Tints fairer than o' the lake of Galilee?

Is any flower than the English rose more  
splendid?

Are women than our women more divine?

Are sweeter sprays and goldener extended  
In Jewish fields than English lush woodbine?

Can we not meet the high God face to face,  
Yea, pant and wrestle for his pure embrace?

Oh, what have we to do with legends devious  
On whose clear brows the English God hath  
shone?

Why bind our souls by lore of ages previous—  
Why guide our spirits by aspirations gone?

See how the sweet sun on our cliff-tops shines;  
Sweeter than suns that thread meandering vines;

There is not any greater God or purer  
Than the strong God within the soul of each:

Nor God-inspired majestic record surer  
Than the long centuries of English speech.

Lo! in the gathered voice of English song  
Is God, than Gods of Jewish speech more strong,

Than all the Hellenic oracles supreamer,  
Than Christ's own crown and spirit more divine:

England rise up! thou slow of heart, thou  
dreamer!

Lo! here is God, and not in Palestine!

Lo! here to-day the high God stands before  
Thy face O England and his feet thy floor  
Impress, and he within thy blue waves singeth  
And on the green slopes of thy thousand hills :  
Be blind no more,—see all the bloom he  
bringeth,  
Mark how his endless hand thy summer fills.

Traitor thou art : yea traitor to thy Lord,  
And murderer of thy God with foolish sword :  
He stands before thee, and thou dost not know  
him  
But wanderest in the Palestinian vales ;  
Yea, blind, inane and vain, thou dost forego him  
And Eastward spreadest soulless fatuous sails.

Traitor thou art, O England ! rise up now  
And gaze towards thine own sky with fearless  
brow :  
Hear thou within the music of thy waters  
The many-voiced fair psalm of God thy king ;  
Mark in the flower-sweet white forms of thy  
daughters  
The fairest blossoms that the ages bring.

Christ's voice was sweet, but sweeter is thine own  
O England, and a loftier seat thy throne  
Than his throne ; O Lord Christ shalt thou for  
ever  
Rule with thine alien sceptre young great lands ?  
Shall these rise up full-grown, defiant, never ?  
Is there no foot against thy foot that stands ?

Yea, I stand forth to-day in England's name  
And through my song upon my fellows shame  
I cry in that they spread not fearless pinions,  
And haply so transcend thee in the air,  
Reaching auguster spirit-high dominions,  
Finding a Father's bosom yet more fair !

A tenderer Mother-God in star-strewn night,  
A kinglier Father-God within the bright  
Abode of day ; king Christ, thou art usurper  
Of English hearts ! thy crown shall pass away,  
Thy chant be but as tongue of linnet-chirper  
To future nightingales' full-voicèd lay.

The age advances : lo ! the white waves break  
With thunder upon thunder, and they take  
The trembling shore by inches ; art thou stable  
When all life's sands and rocks are insecure ?  
Thine empire rotten, and thy creed a fable,  
Shalt thou, the unsuccessful prince, endure ?

Successful art thou, and triumphant, king !  
Victorious and snow-white thine outspread wing !  
But not victorious as the priests who crown  
thee,  
Victorious only through the simple soul :  
In waves of blood these friends of thine would  
drown thee,  
And tides of blood above thy followers roll.

The soul of man is thine ; and thine own town :  
Jerusalem thou hast for seal and crown,

But not the towers of ours the Western  
nations,

Yea, not the roses of our English fields !

Offerings of Easterns, sacrifice, oblations,  
But not the corn the white chalk-cliff-top yields.

Thou hast for handmaids English maidens frail

Who turned at thy presumptuous coming pale,

Forsook their English lover-souls and gave thee

What feeble power of passion-joy they knew :

Thou hast not, nor shouldst have from hell to  
save thee,

One great soul of one English woman true.

Rest thou content with glances dark and hold

Thine hand from meddling with bright locks of  
gold :

Test not the Northern heart or Northern  
weather

But dwell thou in thy balmy Palestine,

Thine olive-skinned lithe loves and thou to-  
gether,

Thou hast no rule where English grey eyes shine.

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## TO BEATRICE.

### I.

The swift years follow  
Each other, and hollow  
As we grow older their voices sound;  
Now dim behind us,  
A sun to blind us  
Once, yea sun-sweet o'er the charmed bright  
ground,  
Shines love, low-gleaming,  
Like red sun dreaming  
Behind dark forest or green far mound.

### II.

Still, still there quiver  
The ripples of river,  
The snow-white sheets of the sea-born foam;  
The meadow-sweet lifted  
By June-breeze, drifted  
In soft bloom-powder, doth flutter and roam  
The wood-glades deep  
Where our dreams sleep,  
Sleep, and abide in their fair old home.

## III.

There roses many,  
For us not any,  
Blossom ; new lovers their bloom shall seek ;  
New face of maiden  
With new love laden  
Shall flame in the forest, and new lips speak  
The same soft message  
Of sweet calm presage ;  
New tides, white-footed, charge up the creek.

## IV.

Apollo and love  
Yet hover above  
The chaste green woodland ; 'singers are there ;  
Birds in the larches,  
And under the arches  
Of grim grey tall trees, echo their fair  
And yearly delight,  
And gold through the night  
Falls gently the flood of the wood-nymphs' hair.

## V.

These yet abide,  
Through the years deride  
Our love, our pleasure, our hopes of things  
That pass swift-sweeping,  
Their dim eyes weeping,  
Now by us and fly us on dank dark wings ;  
The old same splendour  
Of meadow-sweet tender  
In one white flush to the moist dale clings.



## VI.

Thou art not there  
O woman, O fair  
Long-lost loved spirit of early days ;  
Then oh 'where art thou,  
And where thy heart, thou  
Who wanderest from me in flowerless ways  
Where is no singing,  
Yea, no voice ringing  
For ever as ever with changeless praise.

## VII.

The years escape us,  
The long months drape us  
In wearisome mantle of deepening gloom ;  
Oh dost thou, lady,  
Dream of the shady  
Dell where we met when the rose was in bloom  
And the white small lily  
Starlike the hilly  
Dear northland gladdened, with love's perfume ?

## VIII.

Green were the alleys  
Of woods, the valleys  
Were bright with summer, the soft still streams  
Dappled the meadows  
With silver ; the shadows  
Of evening made more tender the dreams  
The stars and the moon  
Took charge of soon  
Splendescient, and crowned with viewless gleams.

## IX.

But not by one light  
Shone love,—the sunlight  
Flamed through the glittering afternoon  
On lovers in corn-fields  
Where laughter is born, fields  
Sweet as the meads of the sky the moon  
Divides demurely  
With white foot, purely  
Rousing in all hearts love's sure tune.

## X.

Wonderful laughter  
Of thine years after  
Rang sweet within me, O girlish queen !  
Wonderful gladness  
That smote the sadness  
Of all the black strange years between  
Came on the heels of it,  
Chimed in the peals of it,  
As though no night of our sorrow had been.

## XI.

Still by me I hear it,  
Tender and clear it  
Rings out, gentle and pure as of old ;  
Again I am near thee  
And watch thee and hear thee,  
Yea, in my hand thine hand I hold,  
And the laughter deathless  
Trembling and breathless  
Keeps me, superb from the mouth of gold.

## XII.

O golden girl-mouth,  
Though time's waves swirl, mouth,  
About thee, they hinder no throb of song;  
They choke thy laughter  
Never for after  
Their passing sweet as before and as strong  
The dear laugh ringeth,  
To my soul clingeth,  
Drowneth the years' wails weary and long.

## XIII.

Ten years between us  
Serve but to screen us  
The better from others, the closer to draw  
Our hearts together,  
As in wild weather  
Souls cling more closely and ice-hearts thaw,  
When some tossed vessel  
Rises to wrestle  
With thundering waves that follow and awe.

## XIV.

So as we rise  
To battle with skies  
Of later lifetime and waves whose sound  
Struggles to 'whelm  
Our tired-out helm,  
And shoals where many a keel doth ground,  
The old green bowers  
Beckon, and hours  
Come back, forgotten, but now new-found.

## XV.

How hath death revelled  
'Mid locks dishevelled  
Since at our feet the stream lisped low !  
How many have left us,  
Dark arrows have cleft us,  
Arrows sped from the death-god's bow :  
And though Apollo  
The death-god follow,  
Some sad seeds hath he of song to sow.

## XVI.

The golden harp-string  
Is sometimes sharp string  
And hath its message of sorrow and grief ;  
Sometimes autumnal  
The song-god's hymnal  
Seems, and saddened the song-god's leaf  
With hues as of death,  
And the song-god's breath  
Like a wounded bird's breath, bitter and brief.

## XVII.

Therefore I dying  
Or living, relying  
On Fate, on woman, on man, or on him  
Who some souls urges  
With vehement surges  
Of song, that they cease not till eyes grow dim,  
Across time's torrent,  
Ten years' red current,  
Gaze—as across a sea-strait grim.

## XVIII.

My whole soul yearns to thee,  
Weeps, and turns to thee,  
Lady, so far in the years behind :  
Thy breath comes sadly,  
Yet not ungladly,  
Just as the waft of a rose on the wind,  
And thy voice clearly  
Whispereth nearly ;  
My spirit by the old waves I find.

## XIX.

Thou art not altered,  
Nor have I faltered  
In my clear mission of endless song :  
If death should seize us,  
His cold touch freeze us,  
Long ere a decade as sad, as long,  
Pass once more by us,  
He may not deny us  
The past, its beauty, its love-voice strong.

## XX.

Death cannot foil us  
Wholly, despoil us  
Of one sweet love-throb that e'er hath leapt  
Through the bosom that bounded  
As some foot sounded,  
Dear to us, clear to us, —near to us stept ;  
The old woods yet the same for us  
With song-flowers flame for us,  
Though ten years' summers have dawned and have  
slept.

*Feb. 13, 1880.*

## TO THE UNCHANGED GOD.

### I.

Thou changest never  
Though men change ever,  
Yea, veer as waves of the shifting tides ;  
Our seasons pass,  
We wither as grass  
That lies burnt brown on the mountain's sides ;  
But thou remainest  
And death disdainest,  
Thy firm foot over the centuries strides.

### II.

When Rome was young  
Thy lips in it sung,  
The Grecian hill-sides caught from thee  
Their rose-red light  
Of joy ; in the night  
Of unknown eras thou wast, and the sea  
Has known thee, O Lord,  
And its music has poured  
Forth for thee since ever it came to be.

## III.

When we look back  
And a flower in the track  
Behold and cling to, where passion hath been  
In the sweet dim past for us,  
A blossom to last for us,  
A white soft-centred memory, a queen,  
We are but a part  
Of thy changeless heart,  
Thine endless spirit, kingly, serene.

## IV.

Thou art in the bowers  
Of memory, the flowers  
The long years gather and treasure and keep :  
In first love's tender  
And infinite splendour,  
O infinite God, thine eyes too weep :  
And thou dost delight  
In the calm of the night  
When lovers upon thy soft breast sleep.

## V.

Not one white rose  
Without thee blows,  
Thou art in the meadows that smile in the morn ;  
The long grey hills  
Thy presence fills,  
And the roar of the breakers is thy strong scorn ;  
And summer divine  
Is surely thine,  
And all its scents at thy word are born.

## VI.

We are but a dream,  
We live not, we seem  
To live, but our living is over and past  
In the hours of a day ;  
Yet thou dost stay,  
Thy beauty fades not, thy breath doth last  
Fragrant as long  
As the roses throng  
The green earth, down to it pink leaves cast.

## VII.

Me singing to-day  
The self same lay  
That David sang or Apollo or bard  
Of unknown city,  
Time shall not pity ;  
No passion may death's pale foot retard ;  
The singers of old  
Are silent and cold,  
The fire of time their harps hath charred.

## VIII.

Ruth in the corn  
As a flower was born  
For a season : she passed to the death-god's hold ;  
The red corn-poppies  
Her fading copies,  
She faded as faded the corn-ears gold  
'Mid which she gleaned  
When the strong man leaned  
Eager to watch her, ardent of old.



## IX.

Helen is gone,  
The lips are wan  
That once to fetter had but to speak ;  
The strange great queen  
In the shades is seen—  
The moons of the shades lie soft on the cheek  
Which Antony kissed ;  
Now the winds and the mist  
Of Lethe alone the white shape seek.

## X.

How many were fair  
In the dense mid-air  
Of the clustered ages that gave the west  
Its glory and crown ;  
Their loves, their renown,  
Their very names, 'mid the dead flowers rest ;  
Iseult is dead  
And the crowned gold head  
Of Guinevere ; grasses cling to her breast.

## XI.

And swift-soul Mary  
Who came with fairy  
Dreams in her clear gaze, flowers in her hand  
To charm all mortals,  
Hath passed the portals  
That open upon the songless land ;  
The black gates clang,  
And the voice that rang  
Is hushed, and the white feet far from us stand.

## XII.

So surely a season  
Of sudden dark treason  
Of death is coming to each and all ;  
But changeless thou  
God laughest, as now  
Before thy winter the frail flowers fall ;  
As cold snows settle  
On thin rose-petal,  
And ivy straggles o'er tower and hall.

## XIII.

To-day we sing to you,  
Our swift songs cling to you,  
O world of blossoms we soon shall leave ;  
But what of to-morrow ?  
Will it bring sorrow ?  
Will some for our passing sigh once and grieve ?  
A singer to-day  
Like a bird on a spray  
Clings to the world's branch ; will it receive ?

## XIV.

Will it receive him,  
Sadden or leave him,—  
He for a day sings, only a day ;  
Others shall follow,  
Never Apollo  
Hath not a song-word potent to say ;  
But what world takes them,  
As this forsakes them,  
The singers whom this world's gods betray ?

## XV.

We pass through the flowers,  
World, of your bowers,  
And some we gather and some disdain ;  
We pluck in your valleys  
The flower-wreath that tallies  
Best with the song-flowers born in our strain ;  
And then we fold  
Our plumelets of gold,  
Or of grey, and quit you : our songs remain.

## XVI.

But oh whither we  
Depart, to what sea  
With strange dark waves, what garden, what  
bower,  
Who knows or can say ?  
What summer-sweet day  
Awaits us, or sorrowful ice-filled shower ?  
What guerdon to win ?  
What joys gathered in ?  
What rose of new passion, unspeakable flower ?

## XVII.

Are there women as white  
In the bowers of the night  
Of death as in rose-hung bowers of the day ?  
Are there faces as fair  
In that desolate air

Where the wings of the hours hang sodden and  
grey?

Are there mouths that can kiss?

Is there infinite bliss

Of love, or doth all love vanish away?

### XVIII.

No soul can reply :

From that mystical sky

Come but faint murmurs, no clear voice rings

Downward in answer,

And but a romancer

Seems each one who message inadequate brings

From that strange far land,

Weirder than star-land,

Whence throbs all music on monstrous wings.

### XIX.

For music is death,

And God, and the breath

Of new-born flowers who change may defy ;

The lips of the Lord

Through its cadences poured

In it thunder and laugh and reward and reply ;

In it seas of the speech

Of God on the beach

Of time plunge downward from fathomless sky.

### XX.

But all else changes

As time's foot ranges

Pitiless, ceaseless, over our plains ;

His barren relentless  
Blossomless scentless  
Finger the date of our death retains ;  
And lo ! as we sing  
A sudden soft wing,  
Death's, darkens the chamber and hushed are our  
strains.











